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MODERN RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM

THE DESTRUCTIVENESS AND IRRATIONALITY OF MODERNIST THEOLOGY

BY
JOHN HORSCH

Author of "Menno Simons, His Life, Labors, and Teachings," "The Hutterian Brethren," "The Failure of Modernism," etc.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
JAMES M. GRAY, D. D.
FORMERLY PRESIDENT OF THE MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE, CHICAGO

THIRD EDITION

Revised

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To Professor J. Theodore Mueller, Th. D.
Concordia Theological Seminary

This volume is dedicated in grateful appreciation

INTRODUCTION

The Christian Century, a leading exponent of modernism, says (January 3, 1924): "Christianity according to fundamentalism is one religion and Christianity according to modernism is another." "There is a clash here as profound and grim as between Christianity and Confucianism. The God of the fundamentalist is one God, and the God of the modernist is another." "Which is the true Christian religion is the question to be settled by our generation for future generations."

This witness is true, and for that reason it is imperative that young ministers, missionaries, Sunday-school teachers, Christian workers generally and especially Christian parents should be provided with the *facts* in the case and not rhetoric. When our sister republic was endeavoring to put down the political rebellion that threatened its life, it asked the United States for ammunition only. It had men and money, but needed that which the men could use and the money could buy. John Horsch's book, *Modern Religious Liberalism,* meets that need in our present spiritual conflict. It furnishes facts. It gives the names of the men in this country who are leading the rebellion against Bible Christianity. It locates the colleges and theological seminaries they represent. It quotes their utterances as to the Bible, God, Christ, man, sin, salvation, the future life, and incidentally divine and human government. It tells you where these utterances are found, gives you title, chapter and page where you can read them in their context. It is fair, clear, scholarly and bold. It is used as a textbook in the Pastors Course of the Moody Bible Institute, and no soldier in the ranks of the evangelical host today can afford to be ignorant of its contents.

James M. Gray.

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MODERN RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM

I

A RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION

ABOUT a generation ago Robert G. Ingersoll made himself a name among unbelievers by publicly denouncing the Christian faith. He considered himself an infidel and was recognized as such by the world at large. The idea that he was a Christian would have seemed absurd to him as well as to his contemporaries.

Now a number of liberalistic theological writers have come forward with the assertion that Robert G. Ingersoll, since he advocated moral betterment and reform, was mistaken in his own opinion of himself as concerns his religious position and his relationship to Christianity. Among those who have expressed themselves on this point is former Dean Shailer Mathews, of the theological department of the University of Chicago, who remarks in a magazine article that the times are past when a man like Ingersoll can be regarded as a veritable anti-Christ.[1] President Faunce of Brown University, in an article on *Religious Advance in Fifty Years,* says, the attacks of Robert Ingersoll "which made our fathers shiver and quake" would today be out of date and have no such effect; "Ingersoll now seems like a crusader against windmills."[2] The figure is taken, as will be readily recognized, from Don Quixote, who fought an imaginary foe which at daybreak turned out to be nothing but harmless windmills. This author evidently believes that the orthodox teachings

1 *The Constructive Quarterly. A Journal of the Faith, Work and Thought of Christendom.* March, 1913, p. 106.

2 *The American Journal of Theology.* Edited by the Divinity Faculty of the University of Chicago. 1916, p. 338.

which Ingersoll attacked have had their day; to fight them now is like making war on windmills. While this is an extravagant opinion, since the liberalistic theological views are by no means so generally accepted as this author intimates, the fact remains that to representatives of religious liberalism the attack on the old Bible faith seems like a war on windmills—so radically does the new theology differ from the old theology which Ingersoll attacked.

The modern theological liberalism takes the position that no one can be considered an unbeliever, or non-Christian, because of his rejection of Christian doctrine. "No man ever lived who really disbelieved in the Christian religion," says Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis. "Infidel to Christianity? You might as well say that a man does not believe in roses or lilies, or is infidel toward wheat and milk, and abhors apples and oranges, grapes and honey. The very thought is absurd and self-contradictory."[3] In other words, there are, according to this writer, no unbelievers. The fact is that men who advocate such views on Christian doctrine as did Robert G. Ingersoll are now often considered Christians and are welcomed into the modern church. Indeed such men are holding professorships in theological seminaries; to them is entrusted the training and education of the coming ministers of the Gospel. It should be added that religious liberalists claim also to have discovered that there are no heathen. Clearly these things are the consequence of a religious revolution.

The fact that modernism is the result of a religious revolution is freely admitted by liberalistic writers. A few of them are here quoted. Dr. Lyman Abbott, the well-known liberalistic leader, says, "The old orthodoxy is right in regarding the New [Bible] Criticism as rev-

[3] *The Religious Digest,* April, 1919.

olutionary."[4] "The philosophy of religion has within the last generation undergone a revolution," says Professor Edward Caldwell Moore, of Harvard University.[5] Professor Edward Scribner Ames, of the University of Chicago, speaks of "the present *revolt against doctrinal theology*."[6] Concerning Dr. Ames' book, *The New Orthodoxy,* a Unitarian periodical, says, it advocates religious conceptions which differ in no wise from those of the Unitarians, and "the new orthodoxy has certainly *nothing in common* with what was formerly cherished under that name."[7] George Holley Gilbert, a defender of modernism, speaks of *"the vast transformation* which the Christian faith is surely and in part silently undergoing."[8]

Professor Errett Gates, of the University of Chicago, says: "Christianity is now being compelled to reshape its message and *redefine its essence.*"[9] "The very conception of religion, our interpretation of spiritual processes, and even our way of conceiving the Living God and His relationship to the world, is undergoing a *radical transformation,*" writes Professor Herbert Alden Youtz, of the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology.[10] The Unitarian theologian, Dr. George E. Ellis,

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4 *The Theology of an Evolutionist,* 1897, p. 61. In one of his more recent books Dr. Abbott has a chapter on *A Religious Revolution.*

5 *The Spread of Christianity in the Modern World,* Chicago, 1919, p. 84.

6 *The Biblical World.* Edited by Shailer Mathews. July, 1917, p. 55. In the quotation to which this note refers, the words, *revolt against doctrinal theology* are printed in type called Italics. In the original these words are not printed in such type. "Italics mine" means that Italics are used by the author of the present book, while in the original the words in question are not printed in Italics.

7 *The Christian Register. A Journal of Liberal Christianity,* February 20, 1919, p. 183. The editor adds that "it is for holding precisely the views set forth in Professor Ames' book that Unitarians have been denied the Christian name and fellowship."

8 *The American Journal of Theology,* 1910, p. 271.

9 *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* edited by Gerald Birney Smith, Chicago, 1916, p. 479. Italics mine.

10 *Democratizing Theology,* Boston, 1919, p. 4.

in an address before the Unitarian Club of Boston, in 1882, said, "The Evangelical sects, so called, are clearly right in maintaining that their view of Scripture and its doctrines draws *a deep and wide division of creed between them and ourselves.*"[11] Dr. James T. Shotwell, of Colgate University, says in his book, *The Religious Revolution of Today*:

> Our problem is not to prove the existence of religious revolution, for that is admitted by all who give the situation any thought, and is the starting point for almost any treatment of the place of religion in modern life . . . a change so fundamental that it seems to imply the overturn of the whole trend of past philosophies.[12]—The brand of superstition is now being placed upon many of the most cherished beliefs of our fathers.[13]

Dr. K. C. Anderson, pastor of a liberal church at Dundee, Scotland, wrote: "Liberal Christianity is a *radical departure* from the creed of Christendom."[14] And again:

> It is well that we should be aware what a radical change is involved in the transfer from the orthodox to the liberal position.[15]—The important question is whether the Christian church can make the great change of belief which the acceptance of the modern critics' Jesus would involve, and remain the Christian church. It is important that the churches of Christendom should realize the kind of Jesus the critics are presenting them with, and *the vast revolution in belief which it involves.*[16]—*The triumph of liberalism is really a defeat, for it means the destruction of Christianity as Christianity has been known in all ages of its history.*[17]

A prominent modernist of Germany writes:

> We destroy much that was formerly accepted by Christian believers. We deny the authority of the Scriptures; we see in Scripture both truth and error. It goes without saying that we

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11 Dunning, A. E., *Congregationalists in America,* 1894, p. 314.
12 Page 6 f.
13 The same, p. 1.
14 *The Hibbert Journal,* vol. 8, 314.
15 *The Monist,* 1915, p. 46.
16 The same, p. 55.
17 The same, p. 57. Italics mine.

do not consider ourselves under duty to abide by the teaching of Scripture. We do not believe the miracles which are recorded in Scripture, nay, we positively deny them. All stories of miracles contained in Scripture we believe to be either fables or allegories. We do not believe that Jesus was the Son of God; we do not believe he was the God-man; we do not believe he was a perfect man; we do not believe he was free from every error, from every sin. Neither his sayings nor his life are to us authoritative in every respect. He is to us a great prophet, like many others.

Dr. John H. Boyd, having accepted a call to a professorship in the McCormick Theological Seminary, said in his farewell sermon to his people in Portland, Oregon:

I have not pleaded with you to believe in God. I have not asked you to bring your sins to be forgiven, primarily. I have not asked you to believe in the realities of the spiritual world. I have asked you to believe in yourselves, in the dignity of men, in the greatness of the human soul. I have asked you to believe in worthy character, in the worthiness of unselfish purity and manliness. I have believed that if you accept the teachings of Jesus Christ and *become conscious of your own possibilities,* you would grow out and for yourselves find God and spiritual realities. Those who can see the infinite reach of themselves can see God, can strengthen themselves, and the spiritual world is open to them. *Men are what they are because of a fatal disbelief in their own divinity.*[18]

Are not such sentiments, expressed by a pastor of an evangelical church, evidence of religious revolution?

President Cyrus Northrup, of the University of Minnesota, says:

It seems to me that, in looking at the state of thought in the [liberalized] church in reference to its own faith, we are confronted by four marked changes which have grown into prominence in the last few years. These changes stated briefly are: First, a decay of belief in the supernatural. Second, what we may call the disintegration [the acceptance of the modern views] of the Bible. Third, new views respecting inspiration [denying the vital differences between the Scrip-

18 *The Christian Register,* (official organ of the Unitarian Church), December 11, 1919, p. 3.

tures and other literature]. Fourth, loss of the sense of accountability [the breaking down of moral standards and responsibility]. These four changes are essentially *one*. They are shoots from a common root—and that root is doubt as to whether God ever has had any communication with men. Under this doubt Christianity ceases to be the religion which God intended for men to cherish and becomes simply one of the religions of the world—a purely human device, like Confucianism or Mohammedanism; of no more authority than these and to be preferred to these only as its teachings are more reasonable and uplifting.

This is a correct statement of the views disseminated by most of our leading theological seminaries.

President Arthur Cushman McGiffert, of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, says: "Whether we like it or not, this [namely the new theology views of the nature of the Christian religion and of conversion] is working a revolution in modern thought, and the end is not yet."[19] Furthermore Dr. McGiffert points out that the doctrine of divine immanence, which is now generally accepted among liberals, ascribes divinity to man, since it is believed that man's nature is one with God's and he needs simply to awake to that supposed fact. "This means, of course, a revolution in the old conception of salvation," this author says further. "What a man requires is not regeneration in the old sense, or a change of nature, but simply *an awakening to what he really is*."[20] Again this author says:

> We have learned, not to think of the Bible as the final and infallible authority and have come to see that there is no such authority and that we need none. The result has been a change of simply untold consequence. The conservatives who feared and opposed Biblical criticism in its early days because *they saw what a revolution it portended* were far more clearsighted than most of the liberals who thought that

[19] *The American Journal of Theology*, 1916, p. 323.

[20] McGiffert, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, p. 206.

it meant simply a shifting of position.[21]—*The chasm is deep. What is before us no one knows.*[22]

One of the most noted defenders of religious liberalism, the late Professor George Burman Foster, of the University of Chicago, said:

The sum of what I have just been urging amounts to the profoundest change of [religious] thought known to history.[23]—One may say that not supernatural regeneration, but natural growth; not divine sanctification, but human education; not supernatural grace, but natural morality; not the divine expiation of the cross, but the human heroism —or accident?—of the cross; . . . not Christ the Lord, but the man Jesus who was a child of his time; not God and His providence, but evolution and its process without an absolute goal—that all this, and such as this, is the new turn in the affairs of religion at the tick of the clock.[24]

A representative of evangelical Christianity writes in *The Moravian*:

It is every day becoming more apparent that in our churches two irreconcilable theological drifts are forcing themselves on our attention. The one we might call the conservative or positive or evangelical position. The other we might call the liberal or speculative or higher-critical position. In the final analysis of these two positions the former insists on a supernatural basis for the Christian religion, while the latter denies the supernatural and substitutes a purely natural basis.

The former position has in our day found its clearest expression through the Bible Institutes and training schools, through evangelistic and missionary activity; the latter through Unitarianism, and so-called higher criticism in many of our theological seminaries and liberal pulpits. Thinking people are discovering, even if rather slowly, *that these two positions can never be reconciled.* They have been, are, and will always be, fundamentally at war with each other, and we might just as well save our precious breath crying "Peace! Peace!" when there can be no peace.

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21 *The American Journal of Theology,* 1916, p. 326. Italics mine.
22 The same, p. 332.
23 *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence,* 1909, p. 178.
24 *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 736.

"Throughout all Protestantism," says a recent writer, "especially in the colleges and theological training schools, under the guise of 'higher criticism' and 'liberal Christianity,' there is being waged the most determined and far-reaching assault upon our holy Christianity that it has ever endured since apostolic times. The Christian religion, 'wounded in the house of its friends,' must get the victory over these insidious but deadly foes." Another writer says:

> It is no use attempting to minimize the difference between the traditional [orthodox] view and the critical treatment of the Old Testament. The differences are immense; they involve different conceptions of the relation of God to the world, different views as to the nature of inspiration, etc. We cannot be lifted from the old to the new position by the influence of a charming literary style or by the force of the most enthusiastic eloquence.

About a book entitled *History of Fundamentalism* a reviewer in the Presbyterian[25] says:

> The book makes it as clear as noonday that modernism is the complete rejection of the historic Gospel of redeeming grace through a crucified Saviour, and the substitution for it of a vague nature religion. There has been so much masquerading by brilliant exponents of modernism that people are deceived. This book will shock its readers into a recognition of the fact that it is historic Christianity in a life-and-death-struggle with a philosophy that in many of its cardinal features is a recrudescence of the pantheism of Spinoza and the deism of Hume and Voltaire and Paine.

It would indeed be useless to deny or belittle the radical contrasts between the old Bible faith and religious liberalism. So great and fundamental are these differences that, if the one is Christianity, the other must be something else. It has been said that modernism has changed all the doctrines of the old faith as held by Christendom from the beginning. The fact is, as pointed out in preceding quotations, that modernism sets aside these doctrines and disowns them.

[25] May 31, 1931.

The late Professor Gerald Birney Smith, of the University of Chicago, a prominent liberalistic leader, editor of *The Journal of Religion,* showed in a review that in the well-known book *Christianity and Liberalism,* by Professor J. Gresham Machen, it is claimed that modernism "is not Christianity at all," and that "it is fundamentally different from Christianity." Then Professor Smith makes this remarkable admission: "If this can be made out, the absurdity of permitting liberals to go on claiming the name of Christianity [and likewise claiming the right to remain in an evangelical church] is apparent."[26] The fact is that this can indeed be made out. The outspokenly liberalistic editor of *The Christian Century,* says frankly that "Christianity according to fundamentalism is one religion and Christianity according to modernism another."[27] There can be no doubt but that other fair-minded modernists will admit the rightfulness of Professor Machen's claim that liberalism is fundamentally different from Christianity and is not Christianity at all. In fact, the most advanced modernists assert that the Gospels are unreliable and we do not know what Christ taught or what Christianity really is. That the difference between modernism and historical Christianity is chasm-deep no serious thinker will deny.

Much as the renunciation of the old faith, on the part of modernists, is to be regretted, the most offensive feature of religious liberalism is that it uses, as a rule, the old Biblical expressions and claims to be Christian theology—an improvement on the old faith;—all this in the face of the fact that modernists, as we have seen, recognize the great chasm which separates them from Biblical Christianity. It is as if within a political party

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26 *The Journal of Religion,* September, 1923, p. 542.
27 *The Christian Century,* January 3, 1924.

which was founded on the principle of a protective tariff there arose a new party which defended free trade, but insisted on retaining the old party name and connections, on the excuse that the protective tariff principles, when properly interpreted, mean free trade.

II

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

THE doctrine of the plenary, or verbal, inspiration of the Scriptures is taught in the Bible and is the only doctrine of Biblical inspiration that is consistent with the claims and contents of the Bible message. Its practical meaning is that the Bible is infallible. This doctrine must not be confounded with the mechanical or dictation theory which implies the suppression of the human element altogether. Though mechanical inspiration is not claimed for the Scriptures, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that, whether the holy writers committed to writing a direct message from God (as did in many instances Moses and the prophets), or whether they recorded what they themselves had witnessed, or other facts of history, they were in every instance moved by the Holy Ghost to such extent that their writings are God's own divine word. This implies the principle of verbal inspiration. The Holy Spirit imparted to them the sacred words to the end that the truth was expressed and error avoided. The original manuscripts of the Scriptures were in this sense verbally inspired.

Inspiration, then, must be distinguished from illumination. True, the holy writers were enlightened by the Holy Spirit, but illumination alone would not have enabled them to write the infallible Word of God. Neither can verbal inspiration be sufficiently accounted for on the ground that the writers were holy men. Many other Christian writers were true saints of the Lord. Again, it is immaterial whether the holy writers knew at the time of their writing all that the Holy Spirit

was directing them to write down inerrantly. Nor can it be supposed that these writers had the ability to write infallibly at *all* times. All this means that the holy writers were, while they wrote the Scriptures, in a very special sense the tools of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is the result of the supernatural working of God. It is the Word of God. The old proof-text method of using Scripture is the method of Christ and the apostles. It is the only method consistent with Scripture teaching as to the nature of the Scriptures.

The various older manuscripts of the Bible which are now in existence have numerous variations of the text, arising from the fact that copyists hardly ever do perfect work. These variations, or various readings, are not of such importance as some of the liberalistic writers would have us believe. The comparative study of the manuscripts by competent scholars has given us a reliable Greek and Hebrew text, and our English versions have been brought to a remarkable perfection. It is certain beyond a doubt that if we had the original writings, it would make no appreciable difference in the teachings of the Bible.

In recent times the opinion has been advanced that the inspiration of Scripture has to do merely with the thought of Scripture. It is supposed that the writers of the books of the Bible wrote the thoughts, or the messages, that were given them of God but were not under the special guidance of God. Yet unless these writers were led by God in the choice of their words to the extent that they wrote inerrantly, we should have in Scripture not the infallible revelation of God but a mere *record* of revelation—a record which would be human and therefore imperfect in character. "If inspiration does not render the holy Scriptures infallible, their nature is no longer divine but human," says Professor George Johnson.[1]

[1] *The Princeton Theological Review*, 1914, p. 461.

There are at the present time theologians who would shift the authority from the infallible Bible to the infallible Christ. They are of the opinion that it matters little whether or no the Bible is inerrant so long as we have Christ and His Word to build upon, just as we have the word of Plato or other great men of antiquity. But the words of Plato cannot be compared with Christ's words on point of importance. Plato did not bring to men a supernatural revelation; his writings must be judged entirely by human standards. Christ, on the other hand, taught truths that come to us as divine revelation. Many of these truths cannot be verified by experience or human knowledge. The fact that Christ was infallible would not give us an infallible divine authority if we had not the inerrant statement or record of His words and acts. What would Christ's infallibility benefit us if the record which we have of Him be unreliable? It is inconceivable—is it not?—that God would accomplish the great work of the redemption of mankind and reveal to fallen man the true way of salvation, and then leave us with a fallible account of it all—an unreliable record such as modernists believe the Scriptures to be.

There are, then, theologians who hold the opinion that the Scriptures are not infallible, though they consider the words of Christ and certain other parts of the Bible acceptable. Now from this position there is but a step to the radically liberalistic view: that, since the Scriptures are not unerring, the account of Christ's supernatural character, His birth, His miracles, etc., is unacceptable. This means the rejection of the Biblical account of the life of our Lord, and the acceptance of the view that we know nothing reliable about His life. Again, he who adopts such views will find that, to be consistent, he cannot hold the record of Christ's words to be more trustworthy than the record of His miraculous works. It is idle to make an attempt to defend the

one while disowning the other. Indeed Christ's own words have largely reference to that which is supernatural and miraculous.

One of the radical critics, Professor Karl Bornhausen, of Marburg, points out that soon after the doctrine of inspiration had been discarded, the Bible record of Jesus' life and miraculous deeds was judged unacceptable, and "close upon this supposition followed the criticism of the words of Jesus."[2] Another liberalistic writer says rightfully, if the Bible is not held to be inerrant, "the teachings of Jesus which are recorded in the Bible cannot be considered as an absolute rule of truth."[3] The same writer (who is a minister in an evangelical denomination) says further: "My ultimate standard is not Christ—neither the Christ of history nor the Christ of faith; I want to know God. I want him to be my standard of perfection. — The standard cannot be creeds and dogmas, the Bible or any particular part of it, or the Master and His teachings."[4] Thus the rejection of the Bible as an inerrant authority leads to the rejection of the authority of Christ. The last mentioned author would retain the authority of God but neglects to tell us what he means when he refers to God. Clearly he does not speak of God as revealed in Scripture. He fails to inform us how God can be his "standard of perfection," if we do not have an authoritative revelation of God.

The term higher criticism was formerly used in an acceptable sense. It meant an examination of the text of the Bible with a view of settling the date, human authorship, purpose, etc., of its component parts. In the modern liberalistic sense higher criticism means the study of the Scriptures from the viewpoint of naturalism. The leading principle is the denial of the super-

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[2] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1914, p. 201.
[3] *The Biblical World,* March, 1919, p. 150.
[4] The same, p. 155.

natural character of divine revelation in Scripture. The supernatural is explained away on the assumption that it is due to mistaken ideas of the writers of the Biblical books. Modern higher criticism is also called the historical method of Biblical interpretation, or the historical treatment of religion, since it undertakes the study of the Scriptures from the purely human historical viewpoint insisting that the history of Christ and of those who, according to Bible teaching, were used of God for special purposes, was not different in character from other human history. The critics take the position that all that cannot be explained by human standards of knowledge is unacceptable. All questions pertaining to Bible study are approached on the basis of naturalism and rationalism. In short, the modern higher criticism is based on the denial of the divine character and authority of the Scriptures.

Modernists tell us, as already intimated, that of the contents of Scripture only that which has to do directly with the religious life of man was given of God to the Biblical writers. This means that inspiration, even in this loose sense, would not apply to Scripture narration of historical events and hence not to the record of miracles. If this were the correct view you might believe in the inspiration of Scripture and yet question the miracles. They who hold such views deny the vital importance of Scripture narration. They ignore the fact that the truth of Christianity depends on certain historical facts, such as the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Nevertheless many of those who take such an attitude would retain some of the moral and religious teaching of the Bible.

Again if such theologians are asked how they suppose that God revealed religious thoughts to the holy writers, they answer, as a rule, that these thoughts came to them through their religious experience. In other words, they see in the Bible (or in parts of it) nothing

more than a record of the religious experience of certain men, or, more correctly speaking, a more or less questionable record of what they thought they had experienced. "We are becoming accustomed to the use of the Bible as a book of religious experience," says Professor Gerald Birney Smith, "rather than a supernaturally produced literature."[5] Now the term "religious experience" is an impressive one, but, as will be pointed out elsewhere, "religious experience" has been deprived of all real meaning by the representatives of liberalism. In the last analysis they hold that the Bible is merely "the outgrowth of men's thinking," just as all other religious books.[6] These liberalistic theologians teach that the religious books of the Mohammedans and pagans, as well as modern religious writings, (being also in a sense a record of religious experience) are, as concerns authority, on a par with the Bible. They see in Scripture simply "man's enlarging thought and discovery of God, not God's progressive revelation of Himself to man." Nevertheless they profess to believe in the inspiration of Scripture. Now such a view of inspiration cannot be taken seriously; it is a mere make-believe. Modern theology denies the personality of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit is "conceived as energy, or force in operation; the force or energy which pervades the world," says Professor H. C. Ackerman, of the Theological Institute at Nashotah, Wis. Hence, this writer asserts that "in the field of religious [and Biblical] inspiration the spirit is [not a personal Being, but] that stirring *interest* in ideas and ideals of God and man which leads to the discovery and foundation of the most efficient religion."[7] In other words, inspiration is not the work of the divine Spirit but of the spirit of man.

[5] *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion*, p. 553.
[6] *The American Journal of Theology*, 1917, p. 355.
[7] *The Biblical World*, March 1919, p. 148.

It is readily seen that this doctrine of inspiration is mere word-jugglery.

The leading modern critics, then, do not distinguish between divine inspiration, in the sense in which this term is used when we speak of the inspiration of Scripture, and the various other uses of the word inspiration. They tell us that the Scriptures are inspired in a similar sense as some poem or some new idea may prove inspiring to us. In their opinion Shakespeare and Goethe were inspired as well as the Biblical writers. Professor Edward Scribner Ames, of the University of Chicago, for example, mentions quite a number of writers: Tennyson and Whittier and Bryant and Lowell and Phillips Brooks and Shakespeare and Maeterlinck and Kepler and Darwin and John Locke and William James who, in his view, should be included in the sacred canon of Scripture.[8] He thinks the canon of Scripture has, by the critics, been "made continuous with the ampler Scriptures of the whole spiritual development of mankind."[9] "Modern religious thinking," says Dr. Gerald Birney Smith, "is learning to draw its inspiration from the world in which we live."[10] George Burman Foster has asserted that a Bible greater and richer than the Christian Bible has come into existence, namely the Bible of Humanity (whatever that may mean). "In this Bible of Humanity," he says, "we too ought to write."[11] And again he says, the new doubt—for which Professor Foster himself stood—flung down the gauntlet to the old Bible faith with the result that "the Sacred Book was found a human book." Therefore the Bible "had no right to rule over man. Man was the book's judge, the book was not man's judge."[12] All these writers are entertaining agnostic, non-Christian views of the Bible.

8 *The New Orthodoxy,* p. 81.
9 The same, p. 69.
10 *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 570.
11 *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence,* p. 292.
12 *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 740.

William Newton Clarke, the well-known advocate of the new theology, wrote: "The authority of the Scriptures is the authority of the truth that they convey."[13] And again: "If Christianity were not historically true, no divine aid in the composition of its scriptures could make it true."[14] Hence this author, with many other writers, rejects the authority of Scripture, substituting for it the authority of truth. He persistently ignores the fact that the most important truths which the Bible brings to us, are dependent on the authority of the Scriptures as God's Word and cannot be verified in any other way. Deny the authority of the Bible and you will find yourself compelled to take the position of an agnostic in regard to these truths. Furthermore, Christianity, as already said, is grounded on certain historical facts, such as Christ's supernatural birth, the Atonement, the resurrection, etc. To maintain these facts when the authority of Scripture is rejected, is impossible. The Scriptures, Christ the Savior, and Christianity stand and fall together. Now all the liberal critics, William Newton Clarke included, tell us that the Bible contains much that is unacceptable historically. In fact they would make the Bible one of the most unreliable books. And then again they have the courage to tell us that the question of the inspiration and authority of Scripture is of no importance.

Such is the modern liberalistic view of the Bible. It has been said that this view makes the Bible a huge mistake. While this is true, it is not the whole truth. If the liberalistic view be correct, the Bible would be not merely a mistake but a fraud—a pious fraud, if you like. But suppose for the moment that the Bible be merely of equal value with Shakespeare and other useful books in general, the wonder is then, that some of our modern critics confess surprise over the fact that

[13] *An Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 45.
[14] The same, p. 38.

the practice of daily reading the Scriptures is generally discontinued in liberalistic circles. Do they not realize that, where their own views prevail, it is asking too much that this practice be kept up? Not long ago a Unitarian writer said in *The Christian Register*:

> It is still a good home to be born into, this home of the liberal faith—good in many respects: but so far as responsibility for the religiousness of the children is concerned the parents have abdicated. Someone says that in the modern home the daily bath has taken the place of the morning prayer. It is better for hygiene—is it for holiness, for character? The modern liberal parent seems to reply, "Cleanliness comes before godliness and one will suffice."—This sunset of religiousness is by no means confined to Unitarian homes nor to those of liberal orthodoxy. But it is probably most marked in homes of the liberal faith, and doubtless the liberalizing has much to do with it.

William Newton Clarke has written a book in which he undertakes to show that as the supernatural and superhuman has faded out of his thought of the Bible and its contents, in the same degree the Bible has become inspiring to him. The more fully he recognized its (supposed) shortcomings, the more valuable he found the Bible to be and the more acceptable as a vehicle of the revelation of God. Similar assertions have been made by many liberalistic writers. The liberal critics, in fact, have generally defended this view. Says Gerald Birney Smith: "For the man of scientific spirit criticism [even if it be of the most radically negative character] is never destructive,"[15] in other words, there is not such a thing as destructive criticism — the most radical of the higher critics are not doing destructive work. This view of the modern liberalists is only an evidence of their inability to consider these matters in an unbiased way. It is refreshing to notice that there are at least a few representatives of liberalism who are

15 *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology*, p. 187.

willing to admit that the modern higher criticism is destructive to the value of the Scriptures.

Wellhausen, the foremost radical Old Testament critic, when asked whether, if his views were accepted, the Bible would retain its place in the estimation of the people in general, said: "I cannot see how that is possible." A Unitarian writer says: "Under the higher criticism the religious value of the Bible tends to disappear."[16] Dr. M. J. Savage, pastor of a Unitarian church in Boston has admitted: "We are gradually drifting away from the idea that the Bible has any special significance or authority."[17] Another Unitarian writer says: "Materialistic science and Biblical criticism have brought multitudes to the brink of despair."[18] "If the whole truth is to be told," says a Unitarian clergyman in New York, "and that is what I am striving to do as far as limitations of space will permit, Unitarians outstrip all others in their ignorance of the Scriptures and in *their inability to appreciate the permanent value of the sacred writings.*" "The danger of liberalism now is," this writer remarks further "that it will discard the Bible altogether. If it does, then liberalism, as we have it, will deserve only death and the world were better off without it."[19] Dr. A. C. Dixon is responsible for the statement that when the British and Foreign Bible Society gave a copy of the Scriptures to each of the graduates of certain universities in India on the day of their graduation, a freethinker who desired to give them an antidote to the Bible, presented them with a book on the Bible written by a well-known liberal British clergyman.

"When destructive criticism proclaimed to the world that its purpose was to save the Bible to mankind," writes the editor of a religious journal, "it deceived it-

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16 *The Christian Register,* Dec. 26, 1918, p. 1236.
17 Dunning, *Congregationalists in America,* 1894, p. 316.
18 *The Christian Register,* January 8, 1920, p. 22.
19 The same, August 26, 1920, p. 14. Italics mine.

self and all who held its presumptions. Where the modern Bible criticism has been accepted, it has robbed the people of the substance of Scripture and left them only the husks. Its effect everywhere is to unfit the people for receiving the Gospel." The *Herald and Presbyter* says: "The most serious damage to the Word of God and the church from destructive critics is not in their attack upon individual facts of books of the Bible, but in the loss of confidence in the Bible as a whole which their methods produce."[20]

William Newton Clarke was, as has been intimated, one of a class of theologians who lay claim to the predicate of loyalty to the Scriptures, but explain that this does not mean loyalty to a theory about the Scriptures. They object to definite teaching regarding the divine character of Scripture. They do not hold to any doctrine defining the sense in which they believe the Bible to be inspired, though, as a rule, they hold that the inspiration of Scripture has not to do with the very words but only with the thoughts—or, speaking more correctly, with *some* of the thoughts—contained in Scripture. They take the position that no one has a right to insist on definitions concerning the character of Scripture, or, in other words, concerning the ground for and import of the loyalty which they demand. The case is similar to that of certain liberal theologians who profess loyalty to Christ, but insist that to consider His deity essential is to demand loyalty to a mere theory about Him. The fact is that, unless definitions are given and we are permitted to know what a given statement about the Scriptures and about Christ really means, it is only the unthinking who can satisfy themselves with such a position. It cannot for a moment be doubted that a weakening down on the doctrine of inspiration has a pronounced tendency of producing a

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20 Quoted in *The Bible Champion,* 1915, p. 131.

modification in the acceptance of the message found in the Bible. The rejection of the doctrine of inspiration goes together with a doctrine of "salvation" which differs radically from that of the Bible.

Dr. Robert Forman Horton, a well-known British theologian, wrote:[21]

The real difficulty of our time, when we come to probe it, is the dethronement of the Bible from its position of unquestioned authority. From the earliest period of Christianity, even in the writings of the earliest Fathers, the sacred Scriptures were held to be the standard and the test of Christian truth: nothing was to be taught as essential except what was contained in them or could be proven by them; and up to the middle of the last century the imposing fortress of the Book remained practically unquestioned and certainly unbreached. No one within the borders of the Church hesitated to regard the Bible as effectively infallible. A quotation from any part of it carried unquestioned weight, and decisions drawn from its decretals were the settlement of all strife.—[*Liberal*] *Protestants have lost their Bible, and in losing it have lost their religion.* How can they shelter in a building which is demolished or which is ever hidden by the scaffolding about it, necessary for perpetual repairs?

Charles Haddon Spurgeon has said:

The turning point of the battle between those who hold "the faith once delivered to the saints" and their opponents, lies in the true and real inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. This is the Thermopylae of Christendom. If we have in the Word of God no infallible standard of truth, we are at sea without a compass, and no danger from rough weather without can be equal to this loss within. "If the foundations be removed, what can the righteous do?" And this is a foundation loss of the worst kind.

"Let us not deceive ourselves," says Professor John Gresham Machen, of Princeton Theological Seminary, "the Bible is at the foundation of the church. Undermine that foundation, and the church will fall. It will fall, and great will be the fall of it."[22]

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[21] *Contemporary Review*, January, 1917, p. 54.

[22] *The Princeton Theological Review*, 1915, p. 351.

III

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

REPRESENTATIVES of modernism sometimes say, their religious thought is founded on experience. This, it must be admitted, is an impressive claim. Experience is a matter not to be trifled with, unless it has to do with trifling things. Obviously an experience may be of great or little value, depending entirely on its nature and content, that is to say, on the question what it is that has been experienced. When we are told that a religion is established on experience, we first of all ask for definitions. What do modernists mean when they speak of religion and religious experience?

There is a host of liberal religionists in our day to whom religion is nothing more than a means to social welfare. The late Auguste Sabatier, Dean of the Protestant faculty of theology in the University of Paris, a notable leader of liberal religious thought, wrote a large volume in defence of what he speaks of as "the religion of the spirit." And what would you suppose is his definition of the religion of the spirit which he advocated? It is, according to his own words, altruism. Professor Josiah Royce, of Harvard University, taught that Christianity is simply a sentiment of loyalty. Professor Edward Scribner Ames says,[1] "Religion is an extraordinary enthusiasm for a cause." Many writers, as we shall see elsewhere, have explained religion to be nothing beyond morality. Professor Roy Wood Sellars, of the University of Michigan, gives this definition: "Religion is loyalty to the values of life." This writer explains that any one who "throws himself whole-heartedly into some field," such as Socialism, art,

1 *The New Orthodoxy*, p. 94.

etc., "has found that concrete and living salvation which ideal effort always brings to man. He is filled with the spirit of consuming loyalty to what he values."[2]

In the opinion of these writers religion is nothing more than endeavor for social welfare, altruism, morality, loyalty, enthusiasm. Now it is true that experience has proven the desirability of these things. Every person of sound mind, be he Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, pagan, rationalist, or what not, will admit that these qualities are to be desired; that they are better than their opposites. This is apparent to every one of common sense. As far as we are aware we have no score with liberalism on this point. The point on which we differ is, that we do not recognize these qualities as the essence of Christianity. If faith in these things were the sum and substance of the Christian faith, it would follow that intelligent people the world over are, wittingly or unwittingly, representatives of the Christian religion. If Christian experience were nothing beyond the conviction that these qualities are desirable, why speak of Christian experience at all?

It may be worth while, in passing, to notice that the definitions of religion offered by modern liberalism show the truth of the words of a prominent modernist who said: "Ours is a time of religious confusion and upheaval." Sometimes a comparison of such definitions with other statements of the same writers brings striking evidence of the existing confusion. Take, for example, Dr. Ames' definition of religion as "an extraordinary enthusiasm for a cause." This author says in another instance: "It is commonly accepted today that man is incurably religious";[3] yet it is not probable that, in Professor Ames' opinion, man is incurably given to a cause. Again it is not clear how man can be said to be incurably religious, if the view of modern psychologists

[2] *The Next Step in Religion*, p. 221.
[3] *The New Orthodoxy*, p. 10.

is accepted, viz., that man's soul is only a development of the animal "mind" and that there is no specific religious instinct. We are told by representatives of religious liberalism, that "religious instinct consists rather in a particular direction and organization of the various instinctive capacities for social living."[4] If this view of the liberalistic religious psychologists is accepted it is difficult to see, we repeat, how man can be supposed to be incurably religious.

Dr. George Willis Cooke, a noted liberalistic theologian has recently published a large book on *The Social Evolution of Religion* in which he defines religion as "the trend and aim of our present collective mind." Professor Roy Wood Sellars, as we have seen, defines religion as loyalty. This writer says further: "Such attitudes and expectations as prayer, worship, immortality, providence [i. e., God], are expressions of the prescientific view of the world. But as man partly outgrows, partly learns to reject the primitive thought of the world, this perspective and these elements will drop from religion."[5] Here, then, is godless, prayerless, spiritless, earthly, materialistic religion—confusion forsooth.

Albrecht Ritschl, the father of liberalistic theology, held that the Christian religion (as he taught it) is established on experience. His views on the points under consideration have been accepted by many representatives of religious liberalism. It is therefore in order to inquire more closely into his position. As has been pointed out elsewhere, he denied not only the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures and the deity of Christ, but also the plan of salvation, as taught in Scripture. He disowned the most essential fundamentals of

4 Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education,* p. 141.

5 *The Next Step in Religion,* p. 6. Professor Sellars is a member of the Unitarian Church. He was one of the principal speakers at the Annual Western Unitarian Conference, held in May, 1920, in Minneapolis.

the Christian faith. He reduced the Christian religion to morality; he made morality the center and constructed his theology from the point of view of ethics. Nevertheless he appealed to religious experience as his authority for what he held to be the Christian religion. Ritschl defended strange ideas, however, concerning the nature of Christian experience, though he would found his theology on it. Since he disowned the deity of Christ, he rejected the idea of an immediate relation to Christ for the Christian. He expressly disowned the thought of entering into such relation by personal faith, or conversion. He held that a belief of having personally obtained grace and salvation through Christ was out of place. In short, a real personal relation to God and having fellowship with Him (I John 1:3) he believed to be "mysticism" which he bitterly detested. Sifted down to its substance, Ritschl and his followers believe Christian experience to be a conviction of the excellency of morality. No one doubts the desirability of morality, but the question is: Does such a conviction deserve the name of Christian experience?

A noteworthy article under the title of *The Religion of Experience* has been published by a Unitarian clergyman. The article is remarkable because it is a striking illustration of the incredibly elusive and deceptive way in which the term religious experience is used by modern liberalists. The writer of the said article declares that religion should be based, not upon God but "upon the strength and worth of man," and that man should realize "that all that he has is the result of his own effort." Man should "not depend upon some supernatural power for wisdom, or recognize this power as the source of all his blessings." Now this writer asserts further that the view which he defends—which in plain words is rank atheism—"*is the universal experience of man throughout the ages.*"[6] Of such a position it may

[6] *The Christian Register*, March 13, 1919, p. 1.

be said that it is religion and religious experience gone mad.

The fact has often been overlooked that man is an essentially religious being. One of the liberalistic writers has said, as already noted, that man is incurably religious. If this is true, as it probably is, it follows that every man has some sort of religious experiences, be they ever so worthless. The most degraded pagan has some satisfaction from his religion. He has a feeling of uneasiness unless he follows his erring conscience. Most Christian believers will realize that before their conversion they were not without religious sentiments and feeling. It is a generally known fact that there are Christian professors who are not really Christians at heart, but they may have religious experiences of some sort.

Though man is naturally religious and hence has naturally some sort of religious experiences, be they ever so vague, it does not follow that his natural religious faculties will enable him to ascertain the saving divine truth and find the way of salvation. The fact is that the most "religious" persons are often spiritually blind, as witness the zeal of some of the heathen devotees of India and other lands. In consequence of man's natural sinfulness the powers of darkness are playing havoc with his natural religiousness and religious experiences. Therefore religious experiences, based on natural "universal" religion, do not furnish an adequate foundation for establishing religious truth. Any religious experimenting on the basis of mere natural religion does not bring satisfactory results. The vital religious questions cannot be solved in this way.

Modern religious liberalism undertakes, by the study of religion from a natural viewpoint, and experimenting along the line of religious psychology, to establish religious truth. The results are destructive even to natural religion. The most thoroughgoing liberalists

now, as we have seen, identify religion with morality. They disown all religion except in so far as they give to morality the name of religion. The study of natural religion for the purpose of finding a foundation or norm for religious truth is the wrong thing also for the reason that such experimenting implies an attitude of indifference or doubt toward God's Word.

To doubt the Christian truth is always the wrong course. Be the doubter ever so honest, the fact remains that doubting the truth regarding salvation leads into darkness, not into light. Hence the necessity of differentiating between experimental and experiential religion or, in other words, between religious experimenting and Christian experience.

Christian experience, to be worthy of the name, presupposes Christian faith. Such experience is excluded where the fundamentals of the faith are treated with indifference, or denied. Discounting the truth of the Gospel makes Christian experience impossible. Deny the deity of Christ and the Atonement and you destroy the possibility of true Christian experience. Again, accept the Gospel message unreservedly and you will experience a great change of mind and heart. If your faith is steadfast, the reality of this change will become more and more clear to you. The change is the result of personal faith in Jesus Christ—not of following a natural impulse but of giving heed to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is not mere development of natural religious powers, but is of a supernatural character—not your own work but the work of God.

Christian experience, then, is the consciousness of a supernatural personal relation to God, the realization of being right with God, being His child, through the great work of Christ. Let no one suppose that this means simply belief in the popular doctrine of the fatherhood of God. On the contrary, it means a realization of the contrast between being God's child by re-

generation and being His child in the sense as taught by modernism, namely in the sense that you were His child before your conversion. True Christian experience brings the firm conviction of the reality of the great redemption wrought by Christ; of the reality of personal salvation through Him.

Christian experience results in victory over sin, as well as victory over the adverse experiences, disappointments and tragedies of human life. And this is a point on which modern liberalism is totally failing. We quote here a remarkable statement by Dean Fenn, of the Divinity School, Harvard University, a Unitarian minister. He says:

> We must seriously raise the question whether [religious] liberalism can bear the weight of the tragedies of human experience. Does not its amiable faith in inherent goodness appear but ghastly mockery when confronted by the facts of life? . . . A religious doctrine which cannot bear the weight of the heart-breaking disasters of life will prove a broken reed piercing the hand of him who leans upon it. Every fall is a fall upward — tell that to a man who by his own sin has fallen from a position of honor and power into deep and damning disgrace.[7]

While the message of religious liberalism, with its impotent God of law and natural force, is but "ghastly mockery" to him who seeks salvation from sin and divine power to uphold him in the disheartening experiences of life, the acceptance of the Christian message, on the other hand, (resulting in Christian experience) is fully adequate to his needs. The actual realization of the living God and of a blessed personal relation to Him necessarily brings the conviction that He is doing the very best for His child even in the disappointments which He may permit to befall him; and that trials will in the end result in great blessing, if they are borne as they should be.

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[7] *The American Journal of Theology*, 1913, p. 516.

This answers also the question, How may I know that the Bible is God's Word? Liberalism says, you should treat the Bible not as a divine message but as any human book. Modernism proposes that we examine the Bible, one part after another, in a critical spirit, to find whether it is acceptable. This means that you appoint yourself a judge over the Bible, instead of approaching it with a willingness to be judged by it. Christian faith, on the contrary, says: If your own brains were sufficient to enable you to find the way of life and accomplish your own salvation without supernatural divine aid; if you were able to set up a standard by which the Bible is to be judged, there would be no need for the Scriptures.

The Bible comes to you with a message. The message, if true, is of incomparable value. You are called upon to experience the truth of the message. It consists of truths, or doctrines, concerning God and His nature, man and his condition, the way of salvation, etc. You are bidden to believe and fully accept the message. There are excellent reasons for believing that the message is true. The most convincing reason, perhaps, is that Christianity will do for you what it claims to do. If you are conscious of personal sin and of an unsatisfactory relation to God, Christianity offers a way for fully removing the burden of sin and guilt and giving you a deep consciousness of a vital relationship to God, the relation of a child to his loving father. The Christian message points out a way to make you abound in the fruits of the Spirit. You will be enabled to lead a life of victory over sin and over the adverse conditions and failures of life. When the real tests come which prove the modern conceptions of God and of religion to be utterly inadequate, the old Bible faith will make you "more than conqueror." It will turn your defeats into victories. It will make you the stronger spiritually and morally for adverse experiences.

True Christian experience will also cure you of the worldly-wise idea that the endeavor to improve social conditions is the essence of Christianity and is of greater importance than maintaining the proper personal relationship to God and bringing others into such relationship. Unless your Christian faith is mere show and pretense, you will clearly see that it is the greatest treasure which you possess. You would willingly give your earthly possessions and social advantages for your faith. You are fully convinced that you can render no greater service to your fellow man than to get him to accept the Christian message and enjoy the blessings of salvation. It will become clear to you that working for the personal conversion of men is the most important service you can render to the community and to society—that above all else society needs truly converted Christians to prevent the destruction and chaos that is threatening it.

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IV

RELIGIOUS CERTAINTY CONSIDERED FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF MODERNISM

SPEAKING of Christian assurance, we have, as in the instance of Christian experience, again before us the question of the nature of Christianity. We have seen that modernism in general offers an ethical interpretation of Christianity. The essence of Christianity is held to be morality. If this view were correct, Christian assurance would simply mean the certainty that morality is a good thing. Concerning this there can be no question. While it is supposed by representatives of modernism that, considered from their own viewpoint, all moral and religious truth is relative, or in other words, there is no absolute moral truth, yet it is a fact that all reasonable men and women agree on the desirability of general morality.

Among the representatives of liberalism who accept the ethical interpretation of religion, believing that morality is the one essential thing, there are those—as for example the Societies for Ethical Culture—who do not desire to be known as religious, or Christian, but have done away with all theology. Others again, namely the Unitarians and other representatives of the so-called liberal Christianity, claim to be religious and approve of some sort of theology, or some modern substitute for theology. It may be safely said that the ethical culture societies never speak of religious assurance, and we may assume that, as this term is used by representatives of the so-called liberal Christianity, it refers to the assur-

ance they have for their theology. For though the message of the more radically liberalistic churches does not appreciably differ from that of the societies for moral culture, the liberalistic churches hold fast to the Christian name and hence cannot consistently renounce all Christian theology. Their theology may be thoroughly modernized, that is to say, they may reject all the fundamentals of the Christian faith and treat all questions of doctrine and theology as entirely secondary and nonessential matters, nevertheless they have a right to the name of a religious society only to the extent that they adhere to some sort of theology. The Unitarians and other religious liberals, in passing, are inconsistent on the question of theology. On the one hand it is their boast to have no theology, and on the other they maintain theological seminaries, they engage in public worship and desire to be recognized as religious societies. Without any doubt, when liberalists speak of religious assurance, they have reference to the question of assurance for their theology.

There is no need of dwelling here further on the fact that all religious liberals are agreed in the rejection of the inspiration and authority of Scripture. Disowning the Scriptures, they cannot consistently fall back on Scripture as an authority for a theology which they may defend. Now about a generation ago the representatives of the liberalistic theology generally accepted religious experience as a substitute for Scripture authority. They held that religious experience is sufficient ground or authority for modern theology. However, to accept this view is frankly to admit to be agnostic ("not knowing") about all that lies beyond the range of experience. "As a result," says President McGiffert, of Union Theological Seminary, *"agnosticism touching many matters, formerly deemed fundamental,* has come

to be the common attitude on the part of religious men; and even of theologians."[1]

In more recent years the leaders of religious liberalism have been led to realize the impossibility of building a theology on religious experience. Says Professor Gerald Birney Smith, of the University of Chicago:

> But further reflection showed that experience cannot be taken simply as a store house from which permanent conclusions may be drawn.[2]—When the appeal to religious experience is acted upon, there emerge certain perplexities which are somewhat confusing. Whose "experience" shall we take as the source of our religious exposition? What is to prevent the agnostic from setting up his "experience" as the norm? . . . Where, now, is the true experience to be found?[3]

Other liberalistic religious leaders have expressed themselves to the same effect. They confessedly realize that religious experience is not an adequate ground for theology. Now, since they have eliminated both Scripture and experience as a religious authority, what, then, is the foundation for the new theology? The answer is that there is no adequate foundation and, strange as it may seem, not a few modern theologians have asserted that their theology really needs no foundation. They say, as has been pointed out, that the new theology is in essence a method rather than a system of doctrine. They are of the opinion that there is no absolute religious truth, which means that there is no religious truth that is true in itself, true under all circumstances and conditions. All religious truth, they say, is relative or subjective, meaning that it is in fact not true, though for practical purposes it is considered well to let it pass. Theology, therefore, is to be used rather than accepted as true. Hence the question of religious assurance is superfluous. Indeed there is no occasion to speak of assurance with reference to a proposition that is not

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[1] *The American Journal of Theology*, 1916, p. 325. Italics mine.
[2] The same, 1910, p. 217.
[3] The same, 1912, p. 594.

claimed to be true. The question whether a religiousness which confessedly lacks assurance or evidence may prove satisfactory to those who accept it, is left to the reader's consideration.

Lest it be supposed that we are overstating the case and that it is impossible that intelligent people accept a proposition which is, by its own advocates, not supposed to be true, a number of liberalistic writers are further quoted on the point in question. A well-informed writer points out that "the view of truth as purely personal or relative" is largely accepted today.[4] "We have come to a place where the very life of religion is threatened by a sickening sense of relativism," says a writer in a prominent theological magazine.[5] Dean Fenn, of Harvard University, testifies: That the acceptance of the liberalistic view of Jesus "is incompatible with religious certainty and finality, the liberal is perfectly well aware."[6] "Liberalism can develop a consistently strong position," said a speaker in a liberal religious congress, "only as a basis of faith shall be discovered" aside from the basis of evangelical faith.[7] Professor Gerald Birney Smith points out that "there is no more fundamental need today" than that a way be found of formulating religious faith anew; and in the same connection he speaks of "a burden that is fast becoming unendurable."[8] The same author speaks of "the agony of uncertainty which is so prevalent in our day."[9] He says further: "But thoughtful men and conscientious people are painfully aware that as yet nothing of a strong, positive character has come to take the place of the older type of theology."[10] This author, though here he de-

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4 *The Unpopular Review,* July-September, 1918, p. 100.
5 *The American Journal of Theology,* 1916, p. 84.
6 The same, 1913, p. 514.
7 The same, 1911, p. 499.
8 *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 549.
9 *The American Journal of Theology,* 1912, p. 607.
10 The same, p. 606.

sires something "of a strong, positive character," has in other instances used language showing that he agrees with Professor Roy Wood Sellars who says *"The church must give up the idea that it can teach final truth on any subject,* . . . the ministers cannot give a final statement about anything."[11] Therefore, so Professor Sellars argues, the church should devote itself to purely humanitarian endeavors.

Clearly, then, modernism is devoid of the most important part, namely a foundation. Could there be a more striking evidence of its secondary nonvital character? And must it not be assumed that people who do their own thinking will eventually realize the unreasonableness of such a theology? An American President is credited with the saying that "you cannot fool all the people all the time." But some of the liberal theologians *are seeking* a foundation for their position. And what sort of a foundation do they seek? Evidently not one of supernatural character, for they, in principle, reject supernaturalism inclusive of divine revelation as given in Scripture. The attempt to find a foundation, outside of Scripture, for the shreds of Christian theology which they may desire to maintain, is evidently futile. Science is silent on the points in question. The hope that something may "turn up" which may serve this purpose is indeed pathetic. It is not unlike the expectation of the shepherd who came to a goldsmith to inquire about the value of a big lump of gold. Asked if he had one, he replied, no, but he hoped to find one. How strange that in an age which boasts of its enlightenment there are those who will accept a theology which its representatives are laboring to maintain without a foundation.

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[11] *The Christian Register,* July 29, 1920, p. 7 seq. Italics mine.

V

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

PHILOSOPHY may be defined as the attempt to ascertain, without the aid of divine revelation, the truth concerning man, his existence, his relation to the universe and his destiny. Philosophy, it is worthy of notice, is older than the Christian religion. The famous philosophers Plato and Aristotle, of Greece, lived in the fourth century B. C. Among modern philosophers Henri Bergson, of France, and Rudolf Eucken, of Germany, deserve mention. The most striking thing about philosophy, perhaps, is the great variety of opinion among its representatives, or, in other words, the unreliability of their conclusions. Says Leslie Stephen:

> State any proposition in which all philosophers agree, and I will admit it to be true; or any one that has a manifest balance of authority, and I will agree that it is probable. But so long as every philosopher flatly contradicts the principles of his predecessors, why affect certainty?

The father of modern philosophy, the Frenchman Descartes (1596-1650), owes his fame to a theory of knowledge which he defended. According to this theory the true basis for philosophy is man's self-consciousness. Descartes doubted everything except his own existence. From the basis of his existence and self-consciousness he attempted to prove the existence of God and the external world. He made his own self-consciousness—i. e. himself—the center and basis of all. All existence, he believed, is mental and what is not known does not exist. This strange theory has been accepted by philosophers in general.[1] But from this start-

[1] Concerning this theory of knowledge and its uncertainty compare Santayana, *Winds of Doctrine*, pp. 13, 40, 55; *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. I, p. 50.

ing point they have arrived at a great diversity of conclusions. Inadequate as such a foundation seems, there is, apparently, no better one for a structure which in principle rejects divine revelation, as does philosophy.

Needless to say, philosophy cannot take the place of the Scriptures as a basis for the Christian faith. This fact is recognized by philosophers in general. Christian theology, or, in other words, the statement of the Christian faith, is founded on divine revelation as given in Scripture. Scripture, being divinely inspired, is the only true basis for theology. And without the acceptance of divine revelation and Scriptural theology, a church worthy of the Christian name could not be maintained. Philosophy, even if it be the so-called philosophy of religion, could not take the place of theology for the church.

The assertion has been made, by the more moderate of the representatives of modernism, that the individual religious feeling, or the religious consciousness, can be made the foundation for a Christian theology. In other words, just as philosophy is based on self-consciousness, so the attempt is made to establish a theology—or, more correctly, a religious philosophy—on *religious* self-consciousness. This means that Scripture authority is to be superseded by the principle that each man should be a law and authority unto himself. But it is clearly impossible to build a Christian theology on no other ground than religious consciousness. It is hardly necessary to repeat here that religious conceptions and consciousness may be unsound and deceptive. Not even upon *Christian* religious consciousness alone could a Christian theology be established, and it is quite out of the question to establish it upon *non-Christian* religious consciousness. This means that to reject the Scriptures as the authoritative record of divine revelation is to discard the only valid foundation for Christian theology. As has already been pointed out, mod-

ernism, rejecting the authority of Scripture, is without an adequate foundation.

The content of Christian theology is Christian doctrine or dogma. Generally speaking dogma is doctrine based on authority, rather than on direct proof. Christian dogma is the doctrine of the Christian church founded on God's Word. The modern aversion to Christian dogma is due to the rejection of the authority of Scripture. Obviously the consistent thing for the religious liberalists, who deny the inspiration of Scripture, is to reject all dogmatic teaching and ascribe to doctrine little, if any importance. It is worthy of notice that science, except in so far as it accepts the Scripture record, is not consistent if it offers dogmatic teaching.

One of the characteristics of modernism is that no doctrine is held to be essential, or as a dogma. Christian doctrine is either rejected outright, or treated as a secondary matter. Professor Gerald Birney Smith shows that the older liberalism rejected all dogmas except three, namely the doctrines of God, freedom of the will, and immortality. Then this writer proceeds to say that the new theology does not hold to any dogma whatever.[2] Neither the three dogmas just mentioned nor other doctrines are considered essential to the modern religious liberalism. "There is still altogether too much of the older feeling," says Professor Smith, "that the result of Biblical study should be to establish an absolutely true and unchanging system of theology."[3] "A new theology of this dogmatic sort," he says further, "would not really mark much advance."[4]

It may sound unbelievable but it is a fact that the religious liberalists hold the method of theology, rather than its content, to be of principal importance. Pro-

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2 *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology,* p. 190.
3 The same, p. 200.
4 *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology,* p. 201.

fessor Smith insists that liberalistic theology is a method rather than doctrine or a doctrinal system.[5] Professor John Wright Buckham, of the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, Cal., says: "It is not doctrine at all, whether old or new, that is fundamental, but faith."[6] What is meant by "faith," however, as the word is used here by this author, is impossible to know. Professor Herbert A. Youtz, of Oberlin Theological Seminary, says: "We evoke Jesus' authority, not to justify our *form* of faith but rather to justify the faith itself."[7] One of the Unitarian periodicals, according to the testimony of its editor, champions faith but "not faith in any particular thing [doctrine] about which others may have their doubt, but *faith in faith itself.*"[8] So modernism does not advocate a particular doctrine, or form of faith, but "faith itself." Such statements may seem profound to the unthinking but, unless "faith itself" is defined and has a real meaning, these statements do not mean anything worth while. For illustration: the Unitarian church paper just mentioned, though professing to stand for "faith itself," opens its columns to those who flatly deny the very existence of God—an evidence that "faith itself," as used by the said editor, does not at all refer to the Christian faith.

Many liberal writers have expressed the opinion that definite doctrine and theology is a matter of very little if any, consequence. Professor George Cross, of Rochester Theological Seminary, for example, thinks "there is something of greater worth to Christian churches than the doctrinal beliefs they hold."[9] Lyman Abbott wrote: "There is as little danger of undermining religion by new [modern]definitions of theology as there is of blotting out the stars from the heavens by a

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[5] The same, p. 201. *The Biblical World,* October, 1914, p. 275.
[6] *The Biblical World,* April, 1915, p. 215.
[7] *The Enlarging Conception of God,* 1914, p. 148.
[8] *The Christian Register,* April 3, 1919.
[9] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1919, p. 143.

new astronomy."[10] "If we seek to keep Christian doctrine unchanged," says Walter Rauschenbusch, "we shall ensure its abandonment."[11] And again this writer says: "The saving power of the church does not rest on its doctrine."[12] A Unitarian minister points out that he ceased to believe the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ and the personality of God. "Little by little it dawned upon me," he observes further, "that faith is not founded on beliefs about things. Faith is founded on the essential structure of the universe, and is an essential characteristic of man and of all other life."[13] Dr. John Herman Randall, until recently a Baptist minister, says: "My own conviction is that if all the creeds and dogmas and paraphernalia of the churches in Christendom today could be set aside . . . nothing would be lost."[14] "Dogma is dead," says the editor of a prominent paper. Many liberalistic writers have expressed themselves similarly. "For a generation now we have been preaching that experience is the great thing, and not creed; . . . we are losing the creed that alone can produce an experience higher than the vagaries of idiosyncrasy," writes the British theologian Peter Taylor Forsyth.[15]

Now, if doctrine is of secondary importance: if *method* instead of doctrine and truth is the principal thing in Christian theology, it follows that there cannot be anything that may be spoken of as the essence of Christianity in any real sense. This is freely admitted by representatives of religious liberalism. To ask what is the essence of Christianity, thinks Professor Shirley Jackson Case of the University of Chicago, is to show that you misconceive the real nature of the modern re-

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10 *The Theology of an Evolutionist,* 1897, p. 3.
11 *A Theology for the Social Gospel,* p. 7.
12 The same, p. 129.
13 *The Christian Register,* October 31, 1918, p. 12. Italics mine.
14 *The Biblical World,* April, 1916, p. 268.
15 *The London Quarterly Review,* vol. 123, p. 194.

ligion.[16] It has no essence, no real, absolute truth, either as concerns religion, or morals.[17] In our rapidly changing civilization, says Professor Gerald Birney Smith, "absolutes are out of place."[18] This means that liberalism has no positive teachings. The denial of all positive religious thought is, in fact, the principal characteristic of modern liberalism. The consequence is that the church, to the extent that it has been liberalized, has become an agency to spread agnosticism.

A number of years ago, Dr. Arthur Sachs, Professor in the University of Breslau, a Jew, wrote:

> Every liberalistic religion carries in its bosom the germ of death. A religion without dogma is a creature of the imagination which under no circumstances is able to give to individual man, much less to the human family, the necessary anchorhold in this life and the hope for perfection in the beyond. At the moment it becomes "liberal," it begins to degrade into a mere philosophy. No system of philosophy has yet been able to satisfy the supernatural longings of man, and we may confidently prophesy that philosophy will always fail in this respect, for every philosophy originates in the human brain while religion represents a gracious divine revelation.

Modern religious liberalism has really only one dogma and consequently knows just one heresy. Liberalism denies that there is positive religious truth. From this viewpoint a person is heretical to the extent that he may believe that there is absolute religious truth. But this new dogma is unreasonable. When liberalists say, there is no positive religious truth, they make an assertion which is absolutely incapable of proof. Clearly this position is one of unreasonable dogmatism. Professor Gerald Birney Smith has rightly said that negative dogmatism is "as unjustified as positive dogmatism."[19] A Christian teacher or minis-

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[16] *The Christian Register,* April 18, 1918, p. 15. *The American Journal of Theology,* 1913, p. 541.
[17] Compare p. 56 of the present book.
[18] *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 558.
[19] The same, p. 539.

ter who teaches nothing dogmatic concerning the Christian fundamentals takes the position that there is no absolute truth as to these points. Such a teacher stands for negative dogmatism while positive dogma is not acceptable to him. This negative dogmatism is quite common in liberalistic circles. John H. Holmes says rightfully: "Even those radical churches which have freed themselves from all theological bonds, have gone to the other extreme of setting up *a structure of denial which is just as exclusive as any of the creeds of Christendom.*"[20]

Not a few liberalistic theologians have thought that loyalty to Jesus is the one thing essential and is a substitute for Christian theology. But loyalty to Jesus does not necessarily mean a religious attitude. Some of the antireligious, atheistic Socialists of Europe profess loyalty to Jesus. They believe Him to have been a great social reformer. "The social gospel arouses a fresh and warm loyalty to Christ wherever it goes, though not always a loyalty to the church," says Walter Rauschenbusch; "it is believed by trinitarians and unitarians alike."[21] But can there be loyalty to Christ without a recognition of His divine nature? True loyalty to Him is based on the truth regarding Him, or in other words, on theology. This is generally denied in modern liberalistic circles. President McGiffert, for example, says: "I am not talking here of the origin and nature of Jesus Christ. . . . All this is of secondary importance."[22] On the contrary, Principal Alfred Ernest Garvie, of New College, London, has well said: "The doctrine of the deity of Christ has been much under debate in recent years. The Christian church cannot accept the denial of that doctrine [that is to say, the church cannot turn Unitarian] without the sacrifice

20 *Unity*, May 22, 1919, p. 140.
21 *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, p. 148.
22 *The American Journal of Theology*, 1911, p. 6.

of its inmost life."[23] Dr. Henry W. Clark says: "Christ's revelation has now been minimized down to a few inspiring ideas and His work reduced to be the application of these ideas, by word and example, to the lives of men."[24] In other words, the setting aside of creed and theology has robbed the church (in so far as the church has been liberalized) of its divine Christ. Of the Redeemer, by atonement, it has made a savior by teaching, leaving it to every man to redeem himself by following the ideal.

Notwithstanding all that liberalists have said in disparagement of doctrine and creed they must be aware that the shreds of Christian theology which they have retained are their only ground for their claim to the Christian name. If they discarded all theological pretense, their lot would not differ from that of the Ethical Culture Societies. Pathetic indeed it is to see the representatives of modern religious liberalism bending their energies upon finding a foundation, or an excuse, for some sort of theology to which they may lay claim. They have thought that such an excuse could be found in the fact that they treat all matters of doctrine as secondary, unimportant.

But to teach Christian doctrine as a secondary matter is clearly inconsistent. Take for example the doctrine of Christ, His person and His work, as taught in Scripture. If this doctrine is true, if Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come into the world to make atonement for the sin of the world, then this is the most stupendous fact in history. Were it not true, we should be compelled to say it is the greatest of falsehoods. It is impossible to treat this doctrine as a secondary matter. If it be not accepted, it must be rejected. The same is true of other doctrines, such as that of God, of

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[23] *The Christian Certainty Amid the Modern Perplexity,* 1910, p. 38.
[24] *Liberal Orthodoxy,* 1914, p. 285.

the plan of salvation, of the immortality of the soul, and of Bible doctrine in general.

It may, of course, be replied that liberalistic theology is substantially a denial of the doctrines of Christianity and what liberalists have retained of Christianity has been revolutionized and modernized. But such denial and "modernization," even if it were justifiable, is not a secondary matter; it is obviously a matter of primary concern. Furthermore, since the theology which modern liberalists teach has no essential doctrines, it cannot be of any real worth. Indeed a theology which holds its own doctrines as secondary, nonvital opinions, and which teaches that the church should doctrinally not stand for anything specific and should have no doctrinal test—such a theology cannot be taken seriously. In the eyes of those who do their own thinking it is a creation of human dreams. A theology of such nature is destined to fail in its self-appointed task of successfully apologizing for its own pitiable existence.

VI

THE FATHERS OF LIBERALISTIC THEOLOGY

THE German theologian Schleiermacher (1768-1834) is generally held to be the principal forerunner of liberalistic theology. Strange as his particular teachings may appear to us, religious liberalism considers Schleiermacher one of the greatest theologians. The reason is that he was the first Christian teacher whose system of theology makes Bible authority superfluous. He taught that knowledge and belief are not vital to religion; hence the acceptance of the Bible is not essential; there is no real need of it. The proper foundation for religion, or religious truth is, in his opinion, not the Scriptures but the natural religious consciousness or feeling. Not only did he exclude belief from the sphere of religion but he held that action also does not really belong to it. Feeling is, in his opinion, the one essential thing in religion. Notwithstanding Schleiermacher and the host of those who recognize him as a theological leader, the fact remains that religion, when it lacks knowledge and acceptance of the truth, on one hand, and a consistent life, on the other, is an exceedingly weak thing, if it is not an instrument of evil.

Albrecht Ritschl, the father of modernism (1822-1889) did not accept Schleiermacher's thought that feeling is the one thing in religion that is essential. However, he agreed with Schleiermacher on the point that feeling, instead of the Scriptures, is the foundation for religious faith, or the source of religious truth. He taught that the basis for theology is to be sought in religious consciousness or feeling, and nowhere else.

As for the Scriptures he denied their inspiration and authority. The follower of Ritschl seeks God and theological truth in himself. He says, he finds "an indefinite and indefinable feeling which he believes to be God." He thinks, it can be rightfully said that God is good and hence God must be personal, for only a person could be good. Ritschl, therefore, teaches the existence of a personal God. Fundamental as this doctrine is, it is not an exclusively Christian teaching; there are other religious systems, such as the Jewish and Mohammedan, that teach the personality of God.

Ritschl rejected the deity of Christ but thought that Jesus was a religious genius, a religious hero who had progressed so far in moral and spiritual attainments that He has to the Christian "the value of God." But the idea that someone or something that is not God should have the value of God is unacceptable from the Christian viewpoint; it is, on the contrary, distinctly pagan. Ritschl speaks of Jesus as divine but flatly denies His divine nature. He also denies His miraculous birth, His miracles, His resurrection. On the atonement of Christ he wrote a large work in which he defends a doctrine which leaves out the cardinal points of the substitutional sacrifice of Christ. The immortality of the soul is treated in his theology as an indifferent matter.

The most objectionable feature of Ritschlianism is its twofacedness. It uses the old words and names with new meanings; the negative liberal thought is clothed in the old orthodox expressions. It comes in the old garb but in content and meaning it differs radically from the old doctrines. The real differences between Ritschlianism and the old Bible faith are in substance and content, rather than in form and appearance. While retaining a semblance of Christian theology, Christian doctrine is either substantially changed or rejected outright. In a word, it is a denial of the essential Christian

truth coming in the cloak of a pious vocabulary. The most notable representative of Ritschlianism in America was William Newton Clarke.

In more recent years a new and more radical type of liberalistic theology has come into vogue. It is called the historical, or historico-religious, method. The representatives of this radical rejection of Christian truth agree with Schleiermacher and Ritschl in disowning the Scriptures as an authority or source of religious truth. Instead of taking religious consciousness or feeling for their starting point, however, they make the general history of the religions of the world the point from which Christianity is to be explained. They start from the supposition that, just as the pagan religious systems are the product of natural growth and evolution, Christianity also, as well as Judaism, is a natural development and not the result of a supernatural divine revelation. If Christianity be better than some other religions, they say, the difference is in degree and not in kind. Not only do they deny the specific truths of the Christian religion but they reject the supernatural. They abandon religious thought so far as it has to do with the supernatural. While the Ritschlians think they find God within themselves, the most advanced representatives of the historical method have a pantheistic conception of God. They teach that the human mind is a part of God and that God is immanent in the world in such manner that it is impossible to distinguish between God and man. They believe, therefore, what the Ritschlian finds in himself and supposes to be God is only his own mind and feeling.

It is worthy of notice that this most advanced type of modernism has to no small extent discarded the vocabulary of Christian doctrine or theology. Some of its representatives frankly admit that the theological counterfeiting of the more conservative modernists is uncalled-for. One of the leading men representing the

historical method was the late Professor Troeltsch, of Berlin. In the liberalistic seminaries Ritschlianism is giving place to radical liberalism. Says Dean Shailer Mathews, "Barring a few significant exceptions, theological seminaries throughout the Protestant world are committed to the historico-critical study of the Bible."[1]

In general it may be said that the more moderate liberals represent some type of Ritschlian theology while the more radical representatives of liberalism follow the so-called historical method.

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[1] *The Biblical World,* November, 1920, p. 554.

VII

THE MODERN DOCTRINE OF DIVINE IMMANENCE

BESIDES the rejection of the inspiration of the Scriptures the foremost tenet in modern liberalistic theology is the dogma of the immanence of God. We speak of it as a dogma for the reason that the representatives of religious liberalism are quite dogmatic in teaching this unproved theory. The immanence of God means that God is in character not distinct from the world but is a part of the world. God is supposed to be the force or energy which has developed the world through the natural process of evolution. Prayer to God is, without question, uncalled-for where this definition is accepted.

It may be in order here to notice that the Scriptures teach that God is a personal Being or, in other words, a Being possessing will and intelligence. Hence He is immeasurably more than mere force or law. The God whom the Bible reveals is the almighty Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the universe. Instead of the modern doctrine that God is the force or energy pervading nature, the Bible teaches God's omnipresence. This means that God is present and—at least in a degree—active in all parts of the universe. Yet He is transcendent to the universe or, in other words, He is not a part of the universe, but is a personal Being. Natural law, life-force, etc., is not God but is the result of His creative work.

Concerning God's activity in the universe it is clear that He may work through natural causes. Just as man may make nature do his bidding by working in agreement with nature's laws, or by bringing a higher natural

law into play where a more inferior law is active, God as the omnipresent almighty Ruler of the universe may to an infinitely greater degree make natural law serve His purposes. And again, He who created nature and its laws may do that which requires more than a direction of natural forces. He may, in a given case, suspend the laws of nature and do that which is superior to and beyond the power of natural law. To say with the critics that the result of any suspension of natural law would under existing conditions mean a greater degree of evil than of good, is to consider the matter from a purely human viewpoint. In God's sight a miracle would not be a miracle if it did not accomplish His purpose, or in other words, if it caused that which is contrary to His plans. As for the divine work of grace in the human heart, this is not the result of the working of the forces of nature. It is of supernatural character, the result of the direct working of God.

Strange to say, modernists have commonly asserted that the Bible teaches an absentee (deistic) God who, after accomplishing the work of creation, left the world to its fate except for some miracles which were comparatively few and far between. This is an example of the unreliability of some of the liberal writers. The Bible conception of God is not deistic but emphatically and consistently theistic.

The modern doctrine of divine immanence is founded not on Scripture but on the theory of evolution. The thought that God is a part of the world is merely a feature of evolutionism. President McGiffert, of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, it is worthy of notice, testifies that "the modern doctrine of divine immanence owes its prevalence, in part, at least, to the very conception of evolution to which naturalism in theology is largely due."[1] This means that the theory of

[1] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1916, p. 323.

divine immanence is founded, at least in part, on another mere assumption, namely the modern doctrine of evolution.

The doctrine of divine immanence has revolutionized theology wherever it has been accepted. It means, as has been pointed out in a preceding paragraph, that "God is not thought of as separate from the universe but rather as its immanent law."[2] "The old conception that God . . . is distinct from our human life" must give way to "the religious belief that he is immanent in humanity," says Walter Rauschenbusch.[3] As defined by the late Professor Royce of Harvard University, the content of all finite minds is included in God's own consciousness and will. The individual self is an identical part of the Divine Self.[4] "The divine is no more separate and aloof; it is within and organic with the human."[5] "God is considered as the soul of the world, the spirit animating nature, the universal force which takes the myriad forms of heat, light, gravitation, electricity and the like."[6] In other words, God is merely a sacred name for all existence. "As God is immanent in the life of man, divine revelation comes from within, not from without," i. e. not from the Bible.[7] The spirit of God is identical with the spirit of man.[8] "In the new theology," says Principal Alfred Ernest Garvie, "the distinction between God and man, which morality and religion alike demand, is confused, if not altogether denied."[9]

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[2] Professor William Adams Brown, in *The Harvard Theological Review*, 1911, p. 16.

[3] Professor Walter Rauschenbusch, in *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, p. 178.

[4] *The Reformed Church Review*, 1917, p. 543.

[5] McGiffert, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, 1915, p. 121.

[6] The same, p. 201.

[7] The same, p. 204.

[8] Foster, *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence*, p. 144.

[9] *The Christian Certainty Amid the Moral Perplexity*, p. 138.

The doctrine of divine immanence then means that God and the world are identical—two names for the same thing. God is supposed to be the world-energy, the natural law. It would follow that the whole world is the expression of the divine force. Hence the world throughout, and all that is or takes place, is supposed to be of divine character. There is therefore no room for the Christian conception of sin, nor for a divine plan of salvation. Modern religious liberalism teaches that there is a "unity of force or of substance, making all things the expression of one all-pervading energy or of one all-embracing divine being."[10] "The doctrine of divine immanence, so widely current in these days, has served to bridge the old chasm between nature and the supernatural and to make them completely one."[11]

"The first and most striking characteristic of the new theology," wrote Professor William Adams Brown of the Union Theological Seminary, "is its view of the world as a unity. The contrast between nature and the supernatural, which was fundamental for the old theology, has disappeared."[12] Says a theological writer, R. H. Dotterer:

> Liberal theologians have emphasized the immanence of God and have said that *all* events are supernatural since all are produced by, or are particular expressions of, the immanent God. The difficulty of this procedure is however that, in thus preserving the right to use the *word* God, we are in danger of so impoverishing the idea of God that it becomes of little value as a religious conception.[13]

"Divine immanence" says a liberalistic writer, "means the surrender of the old view of miracles, and with it of the necessity of believing that such events

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10 McGiffert, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas,* p. 20.

11 President McGiffert, in *The American Journal of Theology,* 1916, p. 323.

12 *The Harvard Theological Review,* 1911, p. 14.

13 *The Reformed Church Review,* 1917, p. 546.

have happened."[14] In short the doctrine of divine immanence is an arch-enemy of Christian truth.

A number of theologians, e. g. William Newton Clarke, have undertaken to defend the transcendence of God—which means that God is not identical with the world—as well as His immanence. This, however, fails to solve the difficulty. God's immanence, unless the expression is devoid of all signification, means that He is the world energy, the one force in the universe. It means that there is no difference between natural and supernatural; that everything is a miracle of God (or rather that there is no miracle); that all that happens is good, being the result of the great universal law or force. To say that God, besides being immanent, is also transcendent, does not solve these difficulties. The assertion that He is both transcendent and immanent presents the gravest mental obstacles. "Merely to *say* that God is immanent and also to *say* that He is transcendent and personal as well as immanent, does not solve the difficulty," observes Ray H. Dotterer, "any more than to *say* that a certain geometrical figure is round and *also* has four right angles will remove the self-contradiction from the notion of a square circle."[15]

In an article published in a religious magazine Bishop Francis J. McConnell points out some, in his opinion, good effects of the doctrine of divine immanence, but thinks the believer in this doctrine "is not always sure of just where to stop," and that there is "but an easy step or rather an easy slip [from this doctrine] to a belief in pantheism which allows no scope for the self-determination of free individuals." "By an easy glide," this writer says, the believer in divine immanence "slips over into the belief that human souls are just flowing forms of divine activity." "Just how to

[14] *The Hibbert Journal*, July, 1914, p. 739.
[15] *The Reformed Church Review*, 1917, p. 546. The fact must be recognized, however, that immanence is sometimes inaccurately used for omnipresence.

make the distinction here," Bishop McConnell says further, "is a problem for the trained metaphysician, but the distinction must be made, at least practically, if we are to preserve religious values in their moral significance."[16]

In a similar way President McGiffert freely admits the grave obstacles in the way of accepting both the immanence and the transcendence of God. He speaks of "the serious difficulties involved in immanence" when the attempt is made to combine it with the Christian belief in God.[17] "Between a God who is beyond the world of matter and a God who is immanent in, and absorbed by, the world of matter, yawns a fatal chasm," says Dr. Henry Berkowitz.[18]

Bishop McConnell thinks, as we have seen, that this is a problem for the metaphysician or, in other words, for the philosopher to solve. But that the philosophers should ever agree in offering a solution of this problem is out of the question. Granted for the sake of argument, that they did, it is needful to remember that what they might have to offer us, would be merely their opinion which from the nature of the case would be incapable of proof. We should not lose sight of the fact that succeeding philosophers would differ from them and that their opinion would not give us an adequate foundation for our Christian faith. And is it not generally realized that philosophy does not even pretend to furnish us such a foundation?

The more practical question, however, is, What are we to do so long as philosophers are engaged in the attempt to reach a decision and to make the distinction that is supposed to enable us to hold the doctrine of divine immanence as well as the doctrines of the Christian faith? If we depended on the philosophers, we should

16 *The Constructive Quarterly,* March, 1913, p. 133.
17 *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas,* p. 220.
18 *The Biblical World,* October, 1917, p. 216.

at the present time be necessarily at sea in this all-important question. We should unquestionably be gliding and slipping down the awful decline called divine immanence. True, we may accept some solution of our own invention just because it may suit our fancy. But this would not be worthy of intelligent persons. Clearly to settle such questions would be to assume the role of a pope. To accept either metaphysics or popery as the ground for a religious faith would be to build on a foundation of sand.

The doctrine of divine immanence, as held by the representatives of the more radical religious liberalism, is merely a form of religious naturalism. It leaves no room for a theology. "As God is in all there is," says President McGiffert again, "to explain religion biologically or psychologically [i. e., naturally] does not make it any less divine."[19] But to explain religion naturally is not theology but religious philosophy. Professor Kirsopp Lake is quite right: "If there is no divine revelation, but only natural religion, there can be not only no systematic theology but no theology at all."[20] Considered from this viewpoint there can, in other words, be no Christianity, unless Christianity be defined as natural religion.

Religious naturalism destroys and obliterates all differences between theology and religious philosophy; it means, in a word, the suicide of theology. That the representatives of the new theology persistently refuse to recognize this is a remarkable fact. Despite their attempted natural explanation of all religion, they undertake to maintain—to keep alive by artificial means—some sort of theology. Some of the modernists have freely admitted that a church cannot live without a theology. But the theology which they make such desperate efforts to maintain is, by their own confession, a

[19] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1916, p. 323.
[20] Strong, *Tour of the Missions. Observations and Conclusions,* p. 189.

secondary matter and is built on utterly inadequate ground. If the church needs a theology, will a mere make-believe, sailing under a theological flag, suffice? It is well to remember that many of those who accept the modern religious views see no need for a church. People who do their own thinking and refuse to be led blindly must eventually realize that a church which needs a theology of such nature to give it an excuse for existence, can not be taken seriously.

The more advanced type of modernism, though as a rule it does not openly deny the existence of God, is practically atheistic. Its God is, as has been shown, a force from which all potencies are supposed to have come, a mere energy which has neither volition nor freedom and is not the master but the servant of nature. Religiously considered belief in such a god is of no value. It is a source of weakness rather than of strength. Idolatry is always a curse, even if the idol be the force inherent in matter. And it does not remedy the matter in the least when liberalists say that you are free to believe in any God you like and to hold that God is transcendent, if you desire. This is making the existence of God a matter of mere opinion and of secondary importance. It is assigning a secondary place to God. It means, in the last analysis, that He exists only as an idea in the minds of people.

Sometimes religious liberalists identify God with humanity, as has been pointed out. "I worship God through Man," says Professor William A. McKeever, of the University of Kansas. "To know God is first to know Man and to know Man is to worship the divinity in him.—Man is my best expression of Deity, and so I bow reverently at this shrine."[21] But, as Professor Roy Wood Sellars, of the University of Michigan, observes, "humanity is not an object to be worshiped"; hence, this liberalistic writer concludes, *"the very attitude and im-*

[21] *Man and the New Democracy*, p. 94.

plications of worship must be relinquished."[22] Professor Gerald Birney Smith says: "The worship of God in a democracy will consist in reverence for those human values which democracy makes supreme."[23] So modernism offers the alternative of either relinquishing all worship, or of worshiping a god of human creation.

A number of recent writers have defended the opinion that atheism is on the decline and that there are few men in our time who deny the existence of God. It is true that it has become the fashion for radical unbelievers to profess belief in God. Even rank materialists like the late Professor Ernst Haeckel of Jena, lay claim to faith in God. Some of Haeckel's followers have organized themselves as a society claiming to be of religious nature. Not only do they profess faith in God but they, in their own opinion, exalt God to the highest eminence, since they assert that God is everything—the only force in existence. We shall here quote a few more of the definitions of God given by modern religious liberals.

Professor Jesse H. Holmes, of Swarthmore College, a liberal Friend (Quaker), says: "God means to me just that unifying influence which makes me long for a brotherly world."[24] The same writer says: "The element of our mysterious inner life which constantly tends toward the good is what we mean by God."[25] Walter Marshall Horton, Professor of Systematic Theology in the Graduate School of Theology of Oberlin College wrote in an article on "The Impotence of God:"

> It is power that men seek when they seek God . . . . A deity is a power, and the deities that will survive in the struggle for existence are those which have the greatest power to inspire and invigorate their devotees and raise them to the highest level of triumphant and abundant life.[26]

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[22] *The Next Step in Religion*, p. 7. Italics mine.
[23] *The Biblical World*, November, 1919, p. 634.
[24] *The Christian Century*, March 1, 1928.
[25] *The Crozer Quarterly*, 1931, p. 209.
[26] *The Christian Century*, April 18, 1931.

Shailer Mathews, in his book, *The Atonement and the Social Process,* defines God as "those elements of the cosmic activity with which personal relations are possible."[27] In his more recent book, *The Growth of the Idea of God,* he speaks of God in the plural form as "the personality-producing [evolutionary] activities of the universe." Again in the same book he defines God as a conception or an idea, namely as our conception of certain cosmic activities.

The late President of Union Theological Seminary, New York, Arthur Cushman McGiffert, in the book, *Christianity as History and Faith,* defended the view that belief in the existence of God is not essential to Christianity, and the denial of His existence is not inconsistent with the Christian faith. Atheistic Christianity is, in his opinion, perfectly legitimate. A number of professors in Protestant theological seminaries have defined God as "an activity." Professor Walter Marshall Horton speaks of God as "a vast cosmic drift or trend toward harmony, fellowship and mutual aid."[28]

Henry Nelson Wieman, of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, professes belief in God but defines God as "the activity which connects the ideal with the actual." Professor John Dewey, of Columbia University, the most widely known philosopher of America, who frankly confesses that he does not believe in God, had a controversy in a Modernist magazine with Dr. Wieman on the question of the latter's view of God. As just stated, Dr. Wieman claims for himself belief in the existence of God. Professor Dewey shows however, that Wieman's belief in God does not substantially differ from his (Dewey's) own belief (or disbelief), though, as already said, Dewey is an outspoken unbeliever. A liberal writer, Edward T. Buehrer, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Haworth, N. J.,

[27] Page 37.
[28] *Theism and the Modern Mood,* p. 117.

has made a pointed statement regarding this controversy in a review of a recent work of Professor John Dewey. Mr. Buehrer says:

> Prof. Dewey ignores traditional terms, labels and loyalties to church and creed entirely, whereas Prof. Wieman mentioned above still employs the words God, Christianity, religion and prayer, conditioned of course to fit the spirit of modern times. The difference is plainly one of words, however, rather than one of philosophic thought.[29]

Dr. John H. Dietrich, a Unitarian minister of the city of Minneapolis, after expressing the view that the orthodox church has failed, writes:

> How different it might be with the world today, had religion based itself upon the strength and worth of man. — How different the world might be today, if religion, instead of teaching man to depend upon some supernatural power for wisdom and to recognize this power as the source of all his blessings, had boldly declared that all he had was the result of his own effort. This virile and human religion needs today to be declared — the religion that looks for no help or consolation from without, but finds it in the indomitable spirit of Good, of God, in man himself — man the doer, the helper, the strengthener, the comforter; the religion which transfers men's efforts from seeking help from heaven whence no help comes to a firm and confident reliance upon themselves in whom lies the possibility of all things.[30]

Professor Gerald Birney Smith speaks of God as "the spiritual forces of the world in which we live,"[31] "the unseen forces of the universe."[32] According to the late Professor Royce, God is the immanent "spirit of the community."[33] The British liberal theologian R. J. Campbell says: "God is my deeper self and yours too; he is the self of the universe."[34] A writer in a British theological magazine thinks God is to be conceived as

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29 *The Christian Century,* August 5, 1931.
30 *The Christian Register,* March 13, 1919.
31 *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 537.
32 The same, p. 511.
33 *The American Journal of Theology,* 1913, p. 638.
34 The same, 1910, p. 254.

"the Common Will of all living creatures."[35] John Herman Randall holds that substance, reality, spirit, God, self are synonymous.[36] President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, defends the view that "God is the truth, virtue, beauty, of man" and the real atheist is only he "who denies these attributes to man."[37] "Do you ask me whether God is simply the spirit of humanity? I reply that God is essentially and simply just that," says Frank Carleton Doan.[38] "God and the world are not distinct in kind," thinks Professor Simon N. Patten.[39] A noted writer in a British magazine says that the church of today "is developing a *worship of humanity.*"[40] A writer in *The Journal of Religion* points out that "many voices today join in the chorus: 'Glory to man in the highest,' and religion is regarded as a purely human undertaking, humanly initiated and humanly consummated. Thus religion avoids scholastic theology and becomes quite democratic. For God the King is overthrown; and positivism [modernism] does not dally long with the fancy of God as president." "Our city has a personality," says Professor Edward Scribner Ames; "each state has an individuality, and every nation is personified through a definite face and figure. Is it not just as natural to sum up the meaning of the whole of life in the person and image of God?[41] The modernism of the more radical type regards God as wholly immanent in human life here and now, and as having no other existence than as a guiding principle of human life.

All this means, as Professor Roy Wood Sellars, of the University of Michigan, has pointed out, that man-

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35 *The Hibbert Journal,* October, 1914, p. 155 ff.
36 *Humanity at the Cross Roads,* 1915, pp. 174, 184.
37 *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology,* vol. I, p. 285.
38 In his book, *Religion and the Modern Mind;* quoted *The Princeton Theological Review,* 1910, p. 168.
39 *The Social Basis of Religion,* p. 81.
40 *The Biblical World,* May, 1917, p. 300.
41 *The New Orthodoxy,* p. 50.

kind, in so far as it has been religiously modernized, "is outgrowing theism [i. e., the belief in God] in a gentle and steady way until it ceases to have any clear meaning." With the fading of this belief, this writer says, "man will be forced to acknowledge that he is an earth-child whose drama has meaning only upon earth's bosom.[42] To those who entertain such views "God becomes a mere figure of speech," to quote Professor George R. Dodson, of Washington University. It has become fashionable in our time, says this author, *"to disguise a practical atheism under theistic phrases.*[43] The God of modernism is not the real power controlling the universe, God is considered a mere idea, a symbol for certain facts of human experience. The full-fledged modernism is atheistic. And we are seriously told by leading representatives of religious liberalism, that the question of atheism is entirely secondary. Since all doctrine is considered nonvital, the doctrine of God must share the common fate. "Liberalism is building a religion that would not be shaken even if the very thought of God were to pass away," says the Unitarian theologian Curtis W. Reese.[44]

It is seen, then, that we have fallen upon days when the confession of belief in God often has no real meaning, or it may have a meaning that is altogether unacceptable.

To know whether the profession of belief in God is more than empty words, it is necessary to ask for definitions. Often it is the case that persons of liberal trend object to the request for a definition. They, in many instances, refuse to let you know what they are talking about. They take the position that one view of God is about as good as another and it matters little what conception of God is accepted. A certain writer, in answer to this opinion, says poignantly: "When we say, 'Oh,

[42] *The Next Step in Religion,* p. 127.
[43] *The Christian Register,* October 2, 1919, p. 15.
[44] *Unity,* August 12, 1920, p. 329.

yes, we both believe in God, to me He is Life Force; to you Jehovah,' we know in our hearts that we are simply conniving at the draining of all definite meaning from the word, in order to confuse the issue and keep the peace."[45] If one comes to believe that there is an inherent force in matter as we find it, and that this immanent life-force is the source of all potencies, then there is no God, and there is no use concerning one's self about Him. Professor George R. Dodson has well said, a minister or professor who holds, as some do today, that God is a concept of the mind, and nothing more, "should state his position without camouflage. He should say to the laymen: 'You are wrong in your faith. God is nothing objective. He is merely an idea in the mind. He does not exist, although for pragmatic [practical] purposes it is well for you to act as if He did.' "

Again this writer says:

> Now it is open to any man to use language as he pleases; he may keep the name of religion for human strivings when he has ceased to believe in God; he may even use the name of God when he means nothing more than a blind, groping cosmic energy or a concept of the mind. But if his sincere purpose be to promote clearness of thought and mutual understanding, it would seem to be better to frankly avow atheism than to dress it in religious garb. If there really is no God . . . if we are being pushed up and on by some blind, groping, cosmic force . . . by all means let us know it and endure it as well as we can. The last thing we desire is to be deceived.

Is it not an appalling fact that the more radical liberalism politely bows God out of existence? For institutions, sailing under a theological or churchly flag, to spread practical atheism may be regarded as unobjectionable from the modern liberalistic viewpoint. Considered from the Biblical point of view it is of decidedly immoral character, as will be further shown elsewhere. Practical atheism in the seminaries means not only disaster to the church, but to society and the state as well.

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45 *The Unpopular Review,* July-September, 1918, p. 97.

VIII

THE BIBLICAL VERSUS THE MODERN VIEW OF PRAYER

BETWEEN the Bible doctrine of prayer and the modern conception of it there is a vital difference. The Scriptures teach that God, the Creator and Ruler of the world, hears and answers prayer. Besides God's answer to particular petitions, the greatest benefit is derived from prayer-fellowship with God. Prayer is laying hold of the fountain of strength that is in Him. True prayer not only moves God but it moves man through divine power. Prayer, that is, the true Christian prayer, is, besides the use of God's Word, the greatest power in the Christian's life.

Prayer may consist, then, of petition or praise, or it may be the still secret prayer of the heart. True prayer is a childlike thing and yet it must be learned in the school of the Holy Spirit. It is communion with God on the ground of the Atonement of Christ. The principal elements of true Christian prayer are self-surrender, the desire that the "old man" cease and God have His way. True prayer is a pestilence to doubt regarding God's Word and to spiritual uncertainty. The truly prayerful heart is in a state of blessed experience of the spiritual realities.

Modernism, on the other hand, denies the manifestation of supernatural divine power in prayer. It denies that God is moved by prayer; in fact it denies that there is a God who answers prayer. When modernists tell us that prayer moves man, they do not mean that man is moved by divine power, but by power which he himself possesses and which he exercises in prayer. "The mental state of peace, exultation, and resolution

which issue upon the exercise of prayer are due to the release of conscious tension,"[1] says Professor Theodore Gerald Soares of the University of Chicago. Man's hope and courage, they say, are heightened by his expectation of help through prayer, therefore he is benefited by it. The modernist prays not with the expectation of being heard but in order that his hope and courage may be increased through the exercise of prayer.

Modernists have given some curious definitions of prayer. According to President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, prayer is communion "with the deeper racial self within us."[2] Another theological writer thinks, prayer is "the conversation of the lower with the higher self."[3] George Burman Foster says: "The only prayer which we have a moral right to pray is precisely the prayer which after all we ourselves must answer." The purpose of prayer, this author thinks, is "to fill us with hope and confidence and courage, so that we do in our own strength what men so often idly entrusted to the gifts or to the activities of some god-spirit apart from life."[4]

The question is here again pertinent: Is there no other way by which modernists may obtain hope and confidence than by praying, when they admit that there will be no answer to prayer except such as emanates from themselves? Is such prayer not a strange and unreasonable attempt to this end? It is indeed, and is so recognized by an increasing number of modernists. Professor Edward Caldwell Moore, of Harvard, is right when he says, liberalists "have minimized the function of worship."[5] Says a Unitarian preacher:

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1 *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 672.
2 *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology,* vol. II, p. 504.
3 *The Biblical World,* June, 1917, p. 385.
4 *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence,* p. 184.
5 *The American Journal of Theology,* 1912, p. 8.

I thought we Unitarians had reached the conclusion that things are done in this world by human effort and not by divine intervention . . . . Once we transfer men's efforts from seeking help from heaven, whence no help comes, to a firm and confident reliance upon ourselves, success is assured.[6]

Professor Edward Scribner Ames, in his radically liberalistic book, *The New Orthodoxy,* points out that the divine is now believed to be within the human. The immanence of God renders the old view of prayer and worship inconsistent. "For the modern man *standing erect in his pride of power,* the old ceremonial full of passivity and surrender is the symbol of a dying age."[7] Considered from the viewpoint of modern liberalism Professor Ames is right. If God is not a personal Being, but a mere immanent force, and if man "in his pride of power" needs no God, then he ought to cease to worship. Prayer and worship are inconsistent from this viewpoint.

It has been shown elsewhere that the Ethical Culture Societies have discarded prayer while liberalistic churches have retained it in their public meetings. These churches would lose the last vestige of an excuse for maintaining the name of a church if they discarded prayer entirely. Both the atheistic Unitarian preacher referred to in a preceding paragraph, and Professor George Burman Foster followed the custom of offering prayer, when they conducted religious meetings. Their excuse is that belief in God is not essential to prayer. It must be admitted that it is the natural thing for man to worship. If he refuse to worship God he will find himself worshiping the creature. Idol worshipers may get some satisfaction from their worship. Need it be said that this cannot be compared with true Christian worship—that there is a world of difference between prayer that is practically atheistic (questioning the ex-

[6] *The Christian Register,* June 13, 1918, p. 5.
[7] *The New Orthodoxy,* p. 117 f. Italics mine.

istence of a God who answers prayer) and the true worship of God?

Religious liberalists say, then, as a rule, that they derive benefit from prayer and are therefore justified in offering prayer. But the question remains, Can there be an acceptable excuse for addressing their prayer to God when they deny that there is a God who answers prayer? Obviously the representatives of liberalism have not found it possible to formulate prayers to be addressed to the object of their worship, hence they address their prayers to God. If they addressed them to the powers from whence they expect benefit through prayer, the unreasonableness of liberalistic prayer would be readily recognized. In fact, it is strange indeed that the liberal theologians expect us to accept the modern view of prayer and yet keep on praying. It is as if a physician would disclose to his patient the great value and the true nature of bread pills. While it is true that for certain nervous disorders bread pills may prove beneficial to those who take them for medicine, no normal person would continue to use bread pills after he has learned what they are made of. Unless there is an Objective Reality to which prayer is addressed—a God who hears and answers prayer—it will be the unthinking that may be found praying.

When it is recalled that "the foundation truth of the new theology is the fundamental unity of God and man," as an eminent new theology writer says, and that the modern immanent God is identified with man, it is clearly seen, that considered from this viewpoint, George Burman Foster is right when he says, no prayers are answered except by man. In the last analysis liberalistic worship is the worship of man, or of humanity, under the guise of the worship of God. "The non-human world is unworthy of our worship," says Bertrand Russell,[8] indicating that he with many others

[8] *The Hibbert Journal,* October, 1913, p. 53.

has made humanity his god. But is man worthy of worship? Is it reasonable that he place himself on the pedestal, "standing erect in the pride of his power," and worshiping himself? Is not man, in fact, the most needy creature? Is not man's self-worship a striking proof of his own depravity and of his blindness in things spiritual? What excuse is there in our enlightened land for the idolatrous worship of humanity?—How exceedingly small is man when he consents to become the object of worship!

Deny the existence of a personal, almighty God and there can be only idolatrous worship, degrading in its effects and unworthy of intelligent people.

The claim that faith in God is not essential to Christianity, and that atheistic "Christianity" is true Christianity, is fully in keeping with the view, held by exponents of the Social Gospel, that the "inner life" is also inessential. It goes without saying that this is simply the denial of the Christian faith—stark apostasy. The advocacy of such views by professors in theological seminaries indicates conditions of almost unbelievable confusion. It has an indescribably paralyzing, demoralizing effect on America's religious and moral life. And yet some of the modernists are dreaming of a religious revival through the acceptance of modernist tenets and the abandonment of the old faith.

IX

THE DEITY OF CHRIST VS. THE MODERN DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINITY OF MAN

THE modern doctrine of the immanence of God has no place for the supernatural. It denies that there ever was a miracle. One would suppose, therefore, that the divinity of Christ is also denied. According to liberal authors this is a wrong guess, however. We are told that Christ is divine, since all men and everything that exists are divine. "Divine and human are recognized as truly one," says President McGiffert, of Union Theological Seminary, "Christ therefore, if human, must be divine, as all men are."[1] Another writer says: "Divine immanence means that we look for Christ's divinity in His humanity, not outside it."[2] Accordingly Christ was divine because He was human. Humanity is considered divine, since it is included in nature and, according to the doctrine of divine immanence, God and nature are essentially one. Therefore Christ, as well as every creature in the universe, is supposed to be divine. "Christ is essentially no more divine than we are or than nature is," says Dr. McGiffert.[3] The question is here pertinent, Do the representatives of modern theology not see that they in this way deprive the thought of Christ's divinity of all meaning? Are they not aware of the absurdity of teaching His divinity in the sense that He is divine because He is supposed to be the product of the universal world energy? The meanest creature in the universe, considered from this viewpoint, is divine in the same sense. If this be the

1 McGiffert, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas,* p. 207.
2 *The Hibbert Journal,* October, 1914, p. 739.
3 *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas,* p. 208.

true view of the matter, why speak of the divinity of Christ at all?

Strange as it may appear, the theologians who reject the deity of Christ nevertheless teach the incarnation of God (in Christ), that is to say, His becoming a man. They do not accept the Scriptural doctrine of the incarnation but advance a new dogma born of their own fancy. According to William Newton Clarke and other liberalistic theologians who hold the dogma of divine immanence, the divine and human nature, as has been pointed out, are essentially alike; there is no real difference. It follows that every man, being of divine nature, is an incarnation of God, some men in greater, others in less degree, and there is no other incarnation save that which takes place in every member of the human family. "The incarnation of God in Christ is nothing else than the incarnation of God in all men carried to a superlative degree."[4] It simply is the presence of God humanity.

Again, the incarnation of God means, in liberalistic teaching, the evolution of humanity. "God is continually incarnating himself in human life"; . . . "all human history represents the incarnation or manifestation of the eternal Son or Christ of God," says the liberalistic British theologian R. J. Campbell.[5] Christ's incarnation is considered an anticipation of what humanity, in the course of the evolutionary process, will become in the future. Hence there is nothing miraculous about the incarnation of Christ. Man is Godlike, says Dr. Daniel Webster Kurtz, of McPherson College; this "makes the incarnation the most simple and natural thing in religion."[6] The more radical modernists say, since God's incarnation in Christ does not essentially differ from His incarnation in all men, it follows

[4] Clark, Henry W., *Liberal Orthodoxy*, 1914, p. 285. This is not the view of Dr. Clark (a British theologian) however.
[5] *The New Theology*, p. 106.
[6] *An Outline of the Fundamental Doctrines of Faith*, p. 26.

that it was not voluntary, and therefore not for redemption. It was the result of natural causes and took place because natural law works of necessity. It did not have its occasion in sin. Christ was the product of the world, not a Savior come from outside the world. In other words, the incarnation in the modern sense is, as concerns Christ and all other men, a necessary occurrence in the evolutionary process.

In short, under various ventures of camouflage a quite new picture of Christ is offered us by modern liberalism. Modern theology has bent its energies upon discrediting the doctrine of the deity of Christ. The radical higher criticism, indeed, has this very purpose, namely to disprove and discredit His deity. This, at least, is the opinion of the liberalistic theologian K. C. Anderson, of Dundee, Scotland, who says: "Not designedly, indeed, but really though unconsciously, the purpose of the criticism of the New Testament, especially in Germany has been made to undermine the doctrine of the divinity of its central figure and to discover a human Jesus."[7] "The bond of union among us all," said a Unitarian professor referring to liberalistic, creedless churches, "is the fight against the deity of Jesus Christ."

Need it be said that the Bible teaches the deity of Jesus Christ? He was the God-man, very God and very man. The divine and the human nature were united in Him. The virgin birth of our Lord is one of the fundamental facts of Christianity. His pre-existence—i. e., His existence before His first coming into the world—follows as a matter of course and is clearly taught in Scripture. With the rejection of the Bible as God's Word, liberalism has consequently also rejected the deity of Christ. "The Bible having been lost," says Professor Benjamin B. Warfield, of Princeton Theological Seminary, "the Christ of the Bible has naturally

[7] *The Monist,* 1915, p. 54.

been lost also."[8] The Christ of the Bible is not acceptable to the modernists; and they admit that their merely human Christ is not the one portrayed in Scripture. At the same time they cannot deny that the Bible is the only source of our knowledge of Christ. So radical a critic as George Burman Foster says: "If Jesus did not say these things [which are reported in Scripture] we do not know what he did say."[9] Dr. F. R. Tennant, a British theologian, says on this point:

> If the historical value of the Gospels be seriously questionable [as the modern critics assert], if the portraiture of Christ therein contained be untrustworthy, and the traditional interpretation of His person be gravely in error, then the fundamental convictions of Christians are threatened, and dogmas so essential as that of the Incarnation, not to speak of the dependent doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, etc., and also the "sure and certain hope of a resurrection" become insecure. — Personal religion, and not merely a theological tenet, is at stake with such men and women as take that interest in theological matters which becomes the intelligent Christian.[10]

It is important to remember that the modern liberal critics not only reject the Bible as a supernatural revelation of God, but they disown all that is supernatural. They deny the history of Jesus in so far as it partakes of the supernatural; they deny His supernatural birth, His miracles and His resurrection. They accept only a human Jesus and consider everything beyond that as mythical and unreliable. They have undertaken the task of separating the natural and supernatural in the Gospel account of Jesus. But they have found it impossible to draw the line between that which from their own point of view is acceptable and that which is not acceptable. In Jesus' life and teaching the supernatural is intertwined with the natural in a way that it is impossible to construct a purely human Jesus from the

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[8] *The Princeton Theological Review*, 1910, p. 174.
[9] *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence*, p. 222.
[10] *The Constructive Quarterly*, December, 1919, p. 703.

Scriptural account. The supernatural is an inseparable part of it. To attempt a separation is to discredit the whole.

If the contents of the Gospels, in so far as they deal with or involve the supernatural, be mere fiction, it would be asking too much of thinking persons to accept the rest as historical. The four Gospels would have to be considered quite untrustworthy. The amazing confidence of the higher critics in their own ability and wisdom is clearly evident from the fact that they believe that they know more about the life and teachings of our Lord than did the writers of the Gospels. Even if we accepted their denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures, we should have to tell them that their position is unreasonable. If the supernatural in the Scriptures were unacceptable and the Gospel accounts contained fiction as well as fact, the critics would be undertaking the impossible in their attempt to separate the two.

The human Jesus of modern theology, then, is not the Jesus of the New Testament Scriptures, and since the Scriptures are the only source of our knowledge of Jesus, the "modernized" Jesus never had any existence except in the fancy of liberalistic theologians; He is only a fiction of unbelieving speculation. "This merely human Christ," says Professor C. W. Hodge, of Princeton Theological Seminary, "is not the Christ of the only sources of information concerning Jesus which we possess; it is not the Christ of the Christian church; it is not a Christ of whose existence we have any valid evidence whatever. It is an imaginary picture, the product of emotion and fancy and of a naturalistic philosophy of immanence."[11]

An increasing number of modern liberalists realize this to be a fact. "Recent [radical] critics have declared that the Jesus of liberal Protestantism is also a fiction,"

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11 *The Princeton Theological Review,* 1915, p. 129.

says Dr. Douglas C. Macintosh.[12] Professor Warfield says:

> Drews [a radical religious liberalist] is perfectly right in insisting that it is this [Biblical] divine-human Jesus or nothing; that there is not a particle of historical justification for the merely human Jesus of the "Liberal" theology, and that it is a degradation of Christianity and a deadly blow at religion to find in this purely imaginary, merely human Jesus the central point and impelling force for all our religious life.[13]

At first the critics asserted that the Biblical account of Christ's miracles and of His sayings, in so far as they involve the supernatural, is mythical and unreliable. What He said about His supernatural person and work and about the coming end of the world, etc., did not suit their fancy; they rejected it as mere fiction. But some of the critics, as intimated in a preceding paragraph, have been led to see that such a position is untenable. They now say that it must be admitted that Jesus said such things and made such claims as the writers of the Gospel report, but being a mere man, these sayings show that He was greatly mistaken. In fact, some of the critics say that He was mentally deranged—He suffered from a mild form of insanity. Such is the blasphemous opinion of De Loosten, Hirsch, and Binet-Sangle who accuse Jesus of mental derangement in one form or other. It must be admitted that a mere man speaking as Jesus did, would have to be adjudged either a deceiver or mentally unsound. If He was not the One that He said He was, His enemies would have been right when they said: "We have a law and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7).

More and more the representatives of modernism accept the view that it is enough to consider Jesus a mere

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[12] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1912, p. 108.
[13] *The Princeton Theological Review,* 1913, p. 299.

ideal and that it is unessential whether He ever lived, or whether the person of Jesus is a myth. Professor Ezra Albert Cook, of the Congregational College of Canada, Montreal, is one of the numerous writers who defend this opinion.[14] We are asked to believe that if Jesus of Nazareth never lived—that is to say, if the whole Gospel story were either fable, or fraud, or both —we could nevertheless adhere to the Christian faith without serious loss.

The more moderate critics, accepting from the Gospel account that which fits into their theological scheme, make Jesus a religious genius or a religious hero. He was not essentially different from other men, they say, but His religious nature was better developed. In other words, He represented perfection of manhood. "Jesus attained in his character all that God ever intended or expected of his Son, Man," says Daniel Webster Kurtz, and "perfect manhood is divine Sonship."[15] In other words, the divinity of Jesus is merely true humanity. This is the view of the majority of representatives of modern theology. It is nothing more than an excuse for the Biblical doctrine of Christ's deity, and a poor excuse, at that; it is a mere husk that has been deprived of the kernel.

This view involves also a denial of Jesus' sinlessness. If He was only humanly perfect and attained to this human perfection through development as a religious genius, He was not without sin. This is freely admitted by some of the liberal theologians. A liberalistic writer says:

> Tempted at all points, as we are, and not without sin would be the logical result from the doctrine of the complete humanity of Jesus. From this conclusion the Unitarian does not shrink. He is ready to admit with the utmost frankness

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[14] In his *Christian Faith for Men of Today.*

[15] *An Outline of the Fundamental Doctrines of Faith,* p. 27.

that in all probability Jesus had his moments of opposition to the divine will which constitutes the attitude of sin.[16]

Professor Rudolf Eucken says rightfully concerning the new theology view of Jesus:

If Jesus therefore is not God, if Christ is not the second person in the Trinity, then he is man; not a man like any average man among ourselves, but still a man. We can therefore honor him as a leader, a hero, a martyr, but we cannot directly bind ourselves to him nor root ourselves in him; we cannot submit to him unconditionally. Still less can we make him the center of a cult. To do so from our point of view would be nothing else than an intolerable deification of a human being.[17]

Dr. K. C. Anderson says:

But the Christ of the church is not such a Jesus [as the critics would have us believe]. The important question is whether the Christian church can make the great change of belief which the acceptance of such a Jesus would involve and remain the Christian church. If the critic's evidence for his thesis is so overwhelming that it must be accepted—well, then it must; but it is important that the churches of Christendom should realize the kind of Jesus the critics are presenting them with, and the vast revolution in belief which it involves.

Christianity from the beginning has been conceived as a redemptive scheme, the good news of a divine being coming down from heaven to rescue fallen man, the Christ or Savior not being a member of the fallen race, but apart from it and superior to it. To make the Christ or Savior a member of the race, no matter how specially endowed with moral and spiritual qualities, is to alter the whole conception and to tear out the heart of the evangelic story. The Christian church has never yet consented to put its Christ into the same category as the prophets of the Old Testament or the philosophers of Greece, but this is just what will have to be done if the Jesus of the critics is to be accepted as the Christ.

The triumph of liberalism is really a defeat, for it means the destruction of Christianity as Christianity has been known in all ages of its history. If Jesus was a man as Socrates, Alexander, Isaiah, and Jeremiah were men, then the whole Christian world has been under a delusion. The discovery

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[16] Emerson, *Unitarian Thought*, p. 165.
[17] Quoted, *The Princeton Theological Review*, 1913, p. 339.

that Jesus was a man merely as those named were men, would be regarded as destructive to Christianity just as would the discovery that Jesus never lived at all. It would be the destruction of Christianity as Christianity has been understood by the great saints and theologians of the past.[18]

[18] *The Monist,* 1915, pp. 55-57.

X

SIN AND SALVATION

THE Scriptures teach that sin involves guilt; it is in the last analysis "enmity against God." The natural state of man is one of total depravity. This does not mean that the sinner is as bad as he can be. It means that the corrupting character and guilt of sin are such that no mere reformation or improvement, no development of that which man may naturally possess can save him. Salvation requires a supernatural regeneration on the ground of the atonement of Christ. God Himself had no other way of salvation for sinful man than through the sacrifice of Calvary—His own self-sacrifice in His Son.

Corresponding to the guilt of sin is the wrath of God against sin. Clearly as the Scriptures teach that God is love, just so clearly they teach also His holiness and righteousness. The wrath of God is the necessary consequence of His holiness and of the guilt of human sin. God loves the sinner but cannot save him except through the atonement of Christ. If the sinner spurns the offer of salvation "the wrath of God remaineth on him." The objections of modern liberalism to the thought of God's wrath are due to the denial of the truth of the Gospel: that Christ who is very God gave His life and died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

Liberal modern theology leaves no room for a real conception of sin. The doctrines of divine immanence and of universal divine Fatherhood take the seriousness out of the thought of sin. The more advanced liberalistic theologians consider sin a necessary incident of evolution, a mere stage in the development of humanity,

the growing pains of the soul, etc. A clergyman, writing in *The Hibbert Journal,* confesses frankly that sin is meaningless to him. Dean Fenn, of the Divinity School, Harvard University, says, in an article on *Modern Liberalism*: "And what of human sin? *Here more than anywhere else the weakness of modern liberalism shows itself.* It may be conceded that traditional [conservative, orthodox] theology made too much of sin, but surely that was better than to make light of it."[1] R. J. Campbell, the author of *The New Theology,* said in a sermon, the lowest vices and most hideous crimes are a blind and mistaken searching after the divine in us. A certain secular writer has well said:

> Certain of our wise men of today have shaded away sin till it becomes an expression of temperament. They tell us that we sin because our grandfather sinned and because our home is situated in the wrong block. These are clever words of clever comforters, and surely they ought to wipe away forever the tears from our eyes. But they do not speak to human need. They leave the sinning one to continue in all despair. He does not ask that his sin be explained away. He wishes forgiveness and a fresh start. In the Book, which is not read as once it was, there are no soft words about sin. But the way out is shown.

The position of the more advanced modernism as to sin is set forth by Shailer Mathews, in his book, *The Atonement and the Social Process.* In this book the doctrine of the Atonement is "reinterpreted" to meet the implications of the new message which modern religion offers as a substitute for the Christian message. Mathews is of the opinion that God can no longer be recognized as a sovereign, or as the one who has laid down laws and holds transgressors guilty. He believes, in other words, that man does not owe subjection to God and is not responsible to Him for his transgression and sin. He holds the view that the idea of human guilt before God must be abandoned, since God is no longer

[1] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1913, p. 516. Italics mine.

regarded as having laid down binding laws. The thought of human guilt, he says, cannot survive the disappearance of divine sovereignty.

"This explains," says a reviewer of this book (himself a modernist), in the *Reformed Church Messenger* "the oft-quoted observation of Sir Oliver Lodge that people are not worrying about their sins." It is seen then that common with other liberals of the more advanced type, Mathews, as we have seen, denies the existence of a God who, because of the very nature of sin and of the Satanic character of insubordination to Him, lays down laws of conduct and holds transgressors guilty, and whose forgiveness, upon repentance, is essential to the beginning of a true Christian life. The book in question may be fitly called a learned attempt to explain away the sinfulness of sin. The reality of sin is denied.

Shailer Mathews, as is perhaps generally known, is a recognized spokesman of liberalism. For many years he was dean of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, one of the largest Protestant theological seminaries in America. He has been associated in editorial and executive capacity with many prominent religious organizations and movements in this country. From 1912 to 1916 he was president of the Federal Council of Churches in America.

The view of sin presented above is by no means peculiar to the author just mentioned; there is convincing evidence that it is shared by the more advanced liberals in general. The well-known Professor Reinhold Niebuhr, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, an outspoken liberal, says: "The liberal church takes such a romantic view of human nature that it does not convict its members of sin at all."[2] The same writer points out that the liberal church has accepted Rous-

[2] *Christian Herald*, May, 1931.

seau's view of human nature, involving the denial of the reality of sin, and has declared every man to be a child of God. "The result is," he observes, "that the liberal church fails to understand the diabolic aspect of human life." Even secular writers have criticized the liberal church for its "essentially romantic" view of human nature. A writer in *The World Tomorrow* (August, 1931) says, in a review of the book by Dr. Sockman, directly to be mentioned, in reference to the modernist view of sin:

> Actual moral and ethical progress comes with the more realistic view of man which regards his perversity and selfishness as more than mere ignorance or a hang-over of animal naturalism.

Dr. Ralph W. Sockman, minister of the Madison Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, New York, and President of the Greater New York Federation of Churches, has published a book entitled *Morals of Tomorrow,* in which he shows that "morals are today in a state of revolution." Though Dr. Sockman is a defender of liberalism, he frankly admits what until recently has been persistently questioned by the liberals, namely that the present-day sad state of morals is mainly due to the fact that "the old authorities [God, Scripture, etc.] are being challenged." Clearly this means that the supposition that Christian morality may be maintained when Christian doctrine has been discarded, has proved false. Dr. Sockman says further: "The word sin is losing its scarlet color." "The vanishing sense of sin is due to the changing conception of God." "The concept of sin as a violation of the law of God has lost its convicting power."

This is a terrible indictment of modernism, made by its own friends and representatives, based on undeniable facts.

Albrecht Ritschl and many others of the more moderate representatives of modern theology teach that the atonement of Christ affected man alone and did not change God's attitude to sinful man. The one and only purpose of Christ's life and death, they say, was to show God's love. To accept the Atonement, according to this view, means simply to believe that God is love. If man could have believed in the love of God without Christ's death on Calvary, no Atonement, according to the new theology, would have been necessary. His death, they tell us, is not important in itself but must be viewed as a part of His life, and His life has value for us only as an example. "Theology has made a fundamental mistake," says Walter Rauschenbusch, "in treating the atonement as something distinct" and not "as an integral part of his life." And again: "His death is a matter almost negligible in the work of salvation."[5] Christ's death was, according to modernism, simply a testimony and seal for His teaching. It was nothing more than the death of a martyr. His life, His teaching and His death were merely a revelation and exhibition of God's love. "Christ was not a Sin Offering to propitiate God," says Daniel Webster Kurtz. "His part in salvation was to reveal God's love and forgiveness and grace."—"His death was the climax of his revealing work of God's love."[6] This is the so-called moral influence theory of the Atonement.

Modern theology makes much of the fatherhood of God. For God's fatherhood in the Scriptural sense it has substituted a new doctrine which exalts God's love at the expense of His righteousness and holiness. The liberalistic view of God's fatherhood leaves out of consideration the fact that, unless God is truth and holiness as well as love, He cannot be love in any real sense. This new doctrine ignores "the sinfulness of sin." It

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[5] *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, p. 260.
[6] *An Outline of the Fundamental Doctrines of Faith*, p. 30f.

stands for an indulgent but soft and weak fatherhood of God; too weak to deal appropriately with sin; too sentimental to insist on the sinner taking the only way of salvation from sin. But all the glib modern talk of God's love, which ignores the Scripture teaching of sin and salvation, is nothing beyond a sickly sentimentalism which has never saved a soul nor ever will. This modern supposed love of God is indeed not the love of an intelligent moral being.

The moral influence theory of the Atonement makes Christ a Savior by teaching, not a Redeemer by atonement. But modern theology conceives of Christ as a Savior in an unreal sense. It does not teach salvation by Christ's work of redemption and of regenerating the heart, but by following His example. Considered from this viewpoint salvation is not the work of Christ but our own work. And since it is supposed that Christ is not the Savior in any real sense, it is an entirely secondary matter who He was. This has been taught by many representatives of modernism. Professor George Cross, of Rochester Theological Seminary, for example, says, the theology which he represents is to develop a new doctrine of salvation in which "questions of Christ's pre-existence and post-existence will be laid aside as unpractical and unprofitable."[7]

A pertinent example of the treatment of the doctrine of the Atonement in modern theology is offered by Walter Rauschenbusch, in his book *A Theology for the Social Gospel.* This author devotes about forty pages to the subject of the Atonement. He addresses himself to the task to show that Jesus died for the sins of the world, not however in the Scriptural sense but rather in the sense that every one who suffered innocently and died a martyr, suffered and died for the sins of the world. But, if this be the right view, the question

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[7] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1915, p. 43.

is in order, Why is it that this author gives so much space to the subject of the Atonement? What is there in his view of the Atonement that would justify his extensive treatment of this question? Why should theology concern itself particularly with the Atonement and the death of Christ, if He merely died the death of a martyr? This is precisely the point that Rauschenbusch fails to clear up. The unreality and artificial character of this liberal teaching on the Atonement is clearly apparent from Rauschenbusch's treatise. Having labored to show that Jesus died for the sins of the world, he says, the death of Jesus is "a matter almost negligible in the work of salvation." And again he says: "What the death of Jesus now does for us, the death of the prophets did for him."[8] After all is said, the fact remains that the denial of the Atonement, as taught in Scripture, not only takes the heart out of the Gospel message but it utterly distorts the picture of Jesus. Deny that His agony and His feeling of being forsaken of God were the result of His sin-bearing, and you are forced to admit that Socrates who innocently suffered death calmly and without agony, was greater as a martyr.

Hand in hand, with the rejection of the thought of Christ as the Redeemer goes the liberalistic doctrine of salvation by character. This doctrine means that a good moral character, such as respectable people are supposed to have, is sufficient for salvation. It is a doctrine for those who feel that their own righteousness fills all requirements. Religious liberalism has no message for the sinner, be he respectable or not, who realizes that he is lost. The Gospel message, on the other hand, is for him who is "down and out" as well as for the one of respectable character, provided that they realize their need of salvation. The offer is to all. The

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[8] *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, p. 262.

vilest of sinners may come and accept it by believing that Christ, his substitute, died for him and shed His blood for his sin. The guilt and stain of sin is cancelled and the new nature implanted in him.

Salvation from sin is a free gift of grace. It is sometimes said that faith is a condition which the sinner must fulfill in order to be saved. In fact, however, justifying faith is but the acceptance of that which God is offering without money and without price. Repentance of sin is necessarily included in seeking salvation. Unless the whole attitude of the seeking sinner is one of repentance, his desire to be saved is unreal. The sinner may come as he is and claim Christ as his personal Savior from sin and from hell. Often the greatest hindrance to the personal saving work of Christ on the part of the repentant sinner is the subtle unbelief which would assist Him somehow in this work. Many a soul persists in the attempt to become worthy of salvation by self-effort. But it is only as the sinner realizes that his own effort accomplishes less than nothing, that it is only a hindrance to the real work; it is when he is willing to accept the work of salvation which Christ has finished on the cross—it is then that salvation for him becomes a fact.

Singular it is that modern theology overlooks the plain fact that the moral influence theory of the Atonement implies a self-contradiction. Unless a real atonement, as the Scriptures teach, was necessary, the question is in order, Why should God permit the best and holiest One of all men to die an ignominious death on the cross? How could this be considered an exhibition of God's love? Even if Christ's deity be recognized, His death on the cross was uncalled-for as a mere proof of God's love. If He died for sinners merely in the sense that sinners put Him to death and to give an example of martyrdom, Professor Rauschenbusch would indeed be right when he says, "his death

is a matter almost negligible in the work of salvation." In that case it would be impossible to believe that God had no better way to show His love than by permitting the tragedy of Calvary. In other words, unless Christ's death had a great purpose, besides showing God's love, it was not even an exhibition of His love. It is clear then, that the moral influence theory is an unacceptable substitute for the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement. The modern theory is, in fact, a denial of it; it is a counterfeit of the Biblical doctrine. As a matter of fact the Bible doctrine of the Atonement is a stumbling block to the self-sufficient, self-righteous, carnal, modern mind. It is unpopular among those who would tune their faith to the spirit of the age. This is a poor excuse, however, for inventing a doctrine which denies the Atonement and introducing the new doctrine under the old name. There can be no valid ground for such counterfeiting.

Liberal leaders have asserted that the Biblical doctrine of salvation is unacceptable to them because, so they tell us, it concerns itself only with the individual, and not with society and its great needs. We are told that the modern mind will not accept an individualistic gospel and that religion must be socialized. Salvation must be interpreted in terms of social service and social reconstruction. The representatives of religious liberalism ignore the fact that the greatest factor for substantially improving things on earth is the personal inward transformation through the Gospel. This is the great power to produce moral character without which true social improvement is impossible. There will always be social improvement to the extent that the message of the Gospel is accepted and the precepts of the Gospel are lived.

Furthermore, modernism overlooks the fact that personal salvation is for the individual a far more important matter than the privilege to live in a socially

improved society. It is more important to have the victory of the spirit through a personal relationship to God than to have one's social and political and economic desires satisfied. And the thought that the world may be regenerated through human instrumentality, or in other words, that conditions on earth may be improved to such extent that men are no longer born in sin and do no longer need personal salvation through Jesus Christ—this thought is utterly fallacious. If individual reformation does not change the heart of the one who reforms, neither will improvement of social conditions break the organized power of evil that is manifest in the world. It is quite true that desirable reforms may often be accomplished, but to reconstruct, or regenerate, the world through human instrumentality is impossible. It is not a man's job.

While these facts should not be lost sight of, it is on the other hand, as intimated in a preceding paragraph, just as important to remember that the Christian church, in so far as she fulfills her calling, is the light of the world and the salt of the earth. It is a matter of the utmost importance that the influence of a Christian's life is what God has designed it to be. The fact that the world cannot be regenerated through human effort can by no manner of means be interpreted to mean that the believer has no responsibility as to the temporal and eternal well-being of his fellows. Biblical orthodoxy, unless it be unreal "dead" orthodoxy, manifests itself by a deep sense of responsibility toward those who need the Christian's service. The Christian's responsibility is as great as his opportunity for service. But to render such service effectively, the principle of separation from worldliness is essential. Worldly religiousness ceases to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

A host of modern theology writers assure us that the great question that faces us is not personal salva-

tion, but that the church must save herself by adopting a message that is acceptable to the modern mind. We are told that, unless the church succeeds in winning the leaders of modern world-thought, she is doomed. But "why should Christianity undertake to adapt itself to the modern world instead of laboring to adapt the world to itself? Is its task to be conformed to this world, and not rather to transform it? Is modern thought the standard of Christian truth, and not the reverse? Is not the whole undertaking an implicit denial of Christianity as a revelation of truth?"[9] It is in very deed.

Here is manifest the fundamental contrast between Christianity and the new religion. Modernism is bound to win the favor of the world and therefore to accommodate itself to the prevailing world-thought. Its great task is supposed to be to modify and reconstruct the Christian message to make it conformable to the prevailing thought and spirit of the age. Professor H. C. Ackerman, of the Divinity School of the Protestant Episcopal Church at Nashotah, Wis., for example, says:

> The church of God in the world today must explain herself to this generation. The eternal truth must be seen with the eyes of the modern age. And to be seen correctly, or more correctly understood, her doctrines must be translated into the vital terms of the day. And this day is undoubtedly materialistic. Consequently *the translation of doctrine must be in materialistic terms.* — Such an applied Christianity must first become scientific in expression. The theologian must learn how to think and express himself in materialistic terms.[10]

Now to express religion, or salvation, in materialistic terms is to materialize it. Professor Ackerman is a representative of radical liberalism and is of the opinion that this is necessary to meet the demands of our age.

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[9] *The Harvard Theological Review,* 1915, p. 288.
[10] *The Biblical World,* September, 1918, p. 197. Italics mine.

Under liberalistic leadership our age, in the language of Professor Roy Wood Sellars, of the University of Michigan, is ascending to "*spiritualized naturalism.*"[11] Naturalism—which means practical atheism—is "spiritualized"; it is given a religious cloak.

There are other liberal theologians who do not advocate so radical a change; all representatives of modernism, however, are of the opinion that religious doctrine must adapt itself to our age; in their opinion the church cannot hope to succeed, or even live, except by virtue of such change. In other words, the question, as already said, is not one of personal or individual salvation, but of salvation for the church. But why should the church be saved, if personal salvation is not needful? Would it not be more honorable for the church to die the death of the righteous than to be turned into a social club or debating society? What right has a society of such character to the name of the Christian church?

The modern idea of saving the church stands in the strongest possible contrast to the Bible teaching on the church and on salvation. Christianity, as represented by Christ and the apostles, and by the believers of all periods, considers it the church's task to overcome the world, instead of accommodating herself to it. The Apostle Paul was beheaded, Peter was crucified, head downward, because they refused to make their message acceptable to the great world leaders. Ye noble army of Christian martyrs, look upon the latter-day modernized religious professors who for success, as the world counts success, are willing to renounce the truth for which you gave your lives. To win the favor of men they take their orders from the world. They believe that the church, in so far as she holds fast to the old faith, is destined to die. Granted for the sake of the argument that they were right on this point, our

[11] *The Next Step in Religion*, p. 2.

grievance is that to abandon her message would for the church be nothing less than to commit an act of self-destruction—suicide.

While our Lord, as we have seen, came to overcome the world and cared so little for world-thought that He made fishermen and tentmakers His first apostles, charging them to preach the Gospel to the poor; while He instructed them to rely on supernatural aid in the great work to which they were called, and gave them to believe that through Him they would be victorious and the cause would prosper though they died at the stake—the representatives of modern liberalism do not rely on supernatural help. Success, in their view, means socialization—wholesale world-improvement, and this they believe impossible through the old Christian message; therefore they have abandoned it. Now this secularization of the church's message is not, as they would have us believe, its crown of glory; it is the cause of the impotency and decay of the modernized church —its burning shame. The denial of the Christian message of personal salvation from sin makes the existence of the church superfluous.

XI

TWO TYPES OF MODERN THEOLOGY COMPARED

THE pope claims that he is a religious authority, a higher authority indeed than the Scriptures. The representatives of modern theology, on the other hand, profess to reject all "authority religion"; they do not recognize any authority, or norm, in religious matters, except the individual religious feeling or consciousness. The more advanced modernists deny even this as a religious authority. Now to build a Christian theology on no other basis than religious feeling is manifestly impossible. The representatives of modern theology reject the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. In so far as they teach theology they do not have an adequate foundation for it. The fact is they, like the pope, substitute their own authority for that of Scripture. Wittingly or unwittingly they follow in the footsteps of the pope on this point. A few examples may serve to make this clear.

Dr. Lyman Abbott has written a book on *The Other Room,* meaning heaven and the life in the beyond. A reviewer in a liberal theological journal raises the pertinent question whether there is, from Abbott's own point of view, a foundation for the picture of heaven which he gives. Abbott rejects the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures; he gives only his own thoughts on the points in question, partly in agreement with and partly contrary to Scripture. He believes in heaven but not in hell. He fails to give a single reason why he believes as he does. Doubtless there are those who read his books and accept his theology on no other authority than that of Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Professor William Newton Clarke, one of the leading modern theology authors in America, wrote a book in which he records his departure from "the faith once delivered." He points out that in his youth and early manhood he accepted the Scriptures as God's inerrant Word. Then he began to doubt the reliability of Scripture. From decade to decade he permitted himself to drift farther and farther from his former position until finally the Bible was for him a book of many errors, no longer an authority in matters of faith. In his *Christian Theology* he asserts that there is no divine inspiration which makes the contents of the Bible authoritative or reliable. The authority of the Scriptures, he says, is found in its truth, not in its supposed inspiration. Since the Bible is believed to be authoritative only in so far as it is supposed to be true, nothing must be accepted on the authority of the Scriptures, or simply because it is written in the Bible. This is the new theology view of Scripture. Whatever may be said of it, it is obviously not the Christian view. In fact, it clearly is the denial of the Christian doctrine of Scripture. It is the view held by unbelievers in general, including pagans. The obvious meaning of the modern liberalistic view of Scripture is that the great truths of Scripture, which cannot be verified except on the ground that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, must be discarded. The all-important questions of the whence, wherefore, and whither of human existence must remain unanswered.

Now while Professor Clarke, in consequence of his denial of the authority of Scripture, rejects some of the fundamental Christian doctrines, he inconsistently maintains a few doctrines for which there is no other ground than Scripture authority. Dean Shailer Mathews says rightly that "generally speaking Clarke found the material of his theology in the Bible."[1] His various theological views he attempted to establish on

[1] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1912, p. 446.

a Scripture foundation. But why should he make such an attempt, if the Scriptures are not authoritative? Was it distasteful to him to proclaim his teachings on his own authority? However that may be, the fact can not be questioned that he substituted his own authority for that of the Bible. This is obvious from his own statements. He says, for example, "I beg my fellow-Christians not to distrust the Bible or to fear for it, as if certain open questions were to be settled to its destruction or even to its weakening." He says further that *"the religious value of the Bible is not an open question."*[2]

Is it possible, it may be asked, that William Newton Clarke wrote these sentences? The Bible is in his opinion neither inspired nor inerrant, and among its errors are not only historical but also religious errors. Nevertheless he asks his readers to accept on his own authority the opinion that the religious value of the Bible—whatever that may mean—is not an open question. When he says the Bible continues to be of great religious value, he obviously does not mean to say that those religious thoughts of the Bible which he rejects are of value. Clearly what he meant to say is that the value of certain religious ideas of the Bible is not open to question—namely of the religious ideas which appealed to Dr. Clarke as acceptable. In other words, under the guise of defending the religious value of the Bible, he defended the religious value of certain ideas which found favor before his eyes. In short, he clearly rejected the authority of Scripture and built his theology on his own authority.

Pathetic indeed was the position of this liberalistic leader in his later years. Since the time of his early manhood he had been drifting, drifting. In his most prominent work he clearly intimates that he expected to become still more liberal in his views. There is good

2 *Sixty Years with the Bible,* p 254.

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evidence to show that he never ceased to drift and to tune his views to the changeable spirit of the age. Evidently he realized the thoroughly unstable character of what he retained as Christian theology; he recognized the danger that his readers and students, drawing the logical conclusion from his own premises, would be led to abandon the theological remnant which he labored to defend. He feared, apparently, that they would, on his own premises, come to the conclusion that there is no valid ground for Christian theology and for the existence of the church. William Newton Clarke, who would not have his students accept anything on Scripture authority, asked them to accept his theology on his own authority.

The late George Burman Foster, Professor in the University of Chicago, and in the latter part of his life also the pastor of a Unitarian church, was a well-known advocate of religious liberalism. He is noted, in fact, for his denial of all that is dear to the Christian's heart. He openly denied the fundamentals of Christianity as well as the doctrinal points which the more moderate liberals, such as Professor Clarke, endeavored to retain. Nevertheless he professed to be an adherent of the Christian faith. He was, as already stated, the pastor of a liberalistic church and a leading representative of modernism. Since he represented the more advanced type of religious liberalism, the question is pertinent, Of what did the religious faith of Professor Foster consist and what were the grounds, or what was the authority on which it was established?

In one of his last publications Professor Foster shows that some students in liberalistic seminaries have decided, against his advice, to abandon the ministry, and have "made shipwreck of faith." This means that they have renounced the church and have joined the ranks of the avowed freethinkers who are open opponents of the Christian church. Now, if the question

can be solved wherein these students have changed when they left the ranks of Professor Foster's followers to become pronounced unbelievers, it will then become clear what he means when he speaks of making shipwreck of faith; and consequently we shall then be able to answer the question, what was his conception of "faith." Therefore we desire to ascertain the differences between the position held by Foster and his followers on the one hand, and that of avowed freethinkers on the other.

Wherein does Professor Foster's position differ from that of the unbelievers? Perhaps he believed in God whom the freethinkers deny? No, he did not differ from them on point of the existence of God. He says: "God is a symbol to designate the universe in its ideal achieving capacity." Religion, he says further, may adapt itself to the idea that God and the universe are identical or, in other words, that there is no God but the universe.[1] He also agreed with the freethinkers in their opinion of Jesus. He denies His deity and even says: "Of Jesus we know honestly very little, almost nothing, with indubitable certainty."[2]

Or did Professor Foster differ from the freethinkers on point of the immortality of the soul? No, there is no difference in their views on this point. He did not teach immortality but held it as an open question, like the freethinkers. Since he was the pastor of a liberal church and as such was under obligation to lead in public worship, perhaps he differed from the freethinkers on the subject of prayer? Again a negative answer must be given. Professor Foster was of the opinion that we should pray no other prayer than one which we ourselves may answer.[3] No freethinker would find fault with this conception of prayer. Or did he dif-

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1 *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence,* p. 183.
2 The same, p. 193.
3 The same, p. 184.

fer from them on point of the church? He occupied an ecclesiastical office while the freethinkers hold that there is no need for the existence of the church. The difference here is apparent rather than real. Foster taught that Jesus never founded a church and its existence is quite inessential. There is, in short, no appreciable difference in doctrinal points. Professor Foster was a freethinker as far as doctrine is concerned.

What about the subject of ethics? Perhaps Professor Foster defended some lofty moral ideals which the freethinkers do not accept. The published statement of principles of the freethinkers shows that this supposition is unfounded. In fact, Professor Foster's position on certain questions of moral reform was so exceedingly liberal and modern that he offended some of his own followers.

When Professor Foster speaks of theological students as having made shipwreck of faith, he does not mean to find fault with them because they reject any or all of the points of Christian doctrine. He did not believe that to deny the doctrines of Christianity is to make shipwreck of faith. The said students could in fact not be his followers without accepting the freethinkers' position on these points. Wherein, then, have they in his opinion erred that he speaks of them as having made shipwreck of faith?

It is clear that Professor Foster would not have spoken of those students as having made shipwreck of faith if they had been willing to follow his footsteps and, though they were unbelievers, to accept the office of minister or teacher in the church. And it must not be supposed that the said students who have abandoned the ministry in consequence of taking a course in a liberalistic divinity school, have scruples against teaching their newly adopted religious views. The point to which they object is, to teach these views under the guise of Christianity. In other words, their sin, in Professor

Foster's eyes, consists in this that, after becoming freethinkers—or, in plain English, unbelievers—they have concluded that they should not pretend to be Christian ministers. Obviously their conscience does not permit them to accept an office which would put them under obligation to teach the Christian religion—only to teach free thought to which Professor Foster and other teachers of similar views have converted them. We should say, therefore, their difficulty is one of conscience rather than of faith. To be plain, their training at the new theology institution has given them the modern theological views but, evidently, has not given them the modernized elastic conscience, at least not to the extent desired by the liberal teachers.

Professor Foster, as said in a preceding paragraph, stood for the denial of Christian doctrine. He substituted for the Christian faith the new dogma that free thought is only the most advanced modern interpretation of, or substitute for, Christianity and, therefore, freethinkers are Christians. However, if freethinkers are not willing to be considered Christians, if they will not be identified with the church, but join themselves to avowed freethinkers, (as did the said theological students), they have in Professor Foster's opinion, made shipwreck of faith. The religious difference between Professor Foster's position and that of the avowed freethinkers is a mere shibboleth.

A curious thing is this modern liberalistic faith, as defended by Dr. Foster, is it not? For the Christian message it substitutes a mere shibboleth. It makes the question of being a Christian, or a religious person, hinge on an exceedingly narrow pivot—the unreasonable dogma of a little new theology pope. On point of narrowness it is almost unprecedented in religious history. Lest the reader think there may be some mistake about it, it is repeated here that George Burman Foster was a distinguished professor in a leading university,

one of the editors of a well-known theological magazine, a notable representative of the modern religious liberalism. Says a theological professor in the University of Chicago, in a sketch of Foster's life: "It is only through the work of such men as Professor Foster that the Church is enabled to keep step with the progress of the ages. They do not sit in her councils, but they break out the paths of thought along which those councils will later follow."[4]

The serious question arises, How is it to be accounted for that thinking people fail to recognize the unreasonableness, the narrow popery of the modern faith for which this man stood and for which so many others stand, practically, today? How can such a position, as this man defended, be countenanced in a great university? Academic freedom, we are told, gives a professor liberty to teach his views. Does it? How long would a professor teaching Romish popery be tolerated in such an institution? And is not the modern liberalism, as represented by Dr. Foster, even more unreasonable and more narrow than Romish popery? What may be the reason, we must ask, that there are in our day so many who accept modern religious notions of any kind, be they ever so absurd?—that even highly educated people who disown the Christian faith seem to be helpless as children when brought face to face with a situation requiring religious discernment? —that they so easily fall prey to "strong delusions" and believe the modern faith to be an improvement on the Bible faith?—that professors in prominent theological seminaries are of the opinion that men like George Burman Foster alone can save the church and that she is doomed if she persists in Scriptural orthodoxy? How is it to be explained that such men take a position which any person of ordinary powers of intelligence should recognize as unreasonable? We have no

[4] *The Christian Register,* January 30, 1919, p. 10.

answer to these questions except the one given by Paul, II Cor. 4:4.

A comparison between the views of George Burman Foster and of William Newton Clarke shows that the difference in their theology was in degree, not in kind. Foster simply had advanced farther on the road on which Clarke also was traveling. Evidently the difference is, at least in part, due to the fact that Clarke lived nearly a generation earlier than Foster and though he yielded to liberalistic influences, he was at the time when the first wave of modern religious liberalism struck our land, a man of more advanced years finding it more difficult to adjust himself fully to the liberalistic viewpoint which he accepted. Another reason for Foster's greater radicalism is that he spent considerable time in the study of liberalistic theology in Europe.

William Newton Clarke, whose work on theology has been more widely read and studied in America than that of any other recent theological writer, is a representative of liberalistic theology, though he was of the more moderate modern school. Not only does he reject the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, but he denies other fundamental Christian teachings. On point of the deity of Christ his teaching in his *Outline of Christian Theology* is unsatisfactory, and in a later work he advanced views on this point which could be subscribed to by any Unitarian. Every reader of his books knows that he disowned other doctrines which, considered from the Scriptural point of view, are of vital importance.

One of the most objectionable parts of Clarke's *Theology,* is the section treating of the work of Christ, the Redemption and Atonement. The essential points are denied. The Bible teaches that sin is so "exceeding sinful" that the sacrifice of Calvary (God's self-sacrifice) was necessary to make a way for sinful man to be saved. Christ, the just and innocent One, made atone-

ment for the sin of the world by His vicarious death. He died for us. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. He bore our sin. Alone through His blood which He gave for a ransom there is salvation for fallen man. His perfect righteousness is accounted to those who believe in Him. Clarke ignores and denies these vital truths. He stands for the "moral influence theory" of the Atonement. He sets aside the Scripture teaching of Christ satisfying the divine law in our stead; he denies the doctrine of justification by faith. In short, Clarke denies the evangelical doctrine of the Atonement and of salvation by faith—the very heart of the Gospel message. He gives us a substitute which at first glance has the appearance of the genuine thing, but a close examination shows it to be a counterfeit. Indeed the pertinent chapters in his book may be said to be a masterpiece of deception.

The pertinent fact deserves notice that William Newton Clarke accomplished far more for the cause of modern religious liberalism than George Burman Foster. Where Foster has one reader, Clarke has a hundred. While Foster's free thought position cannot possibly be mistaken, there are those who read Clarke and accept his views without recognizing their unscripturalness. Foster slew his thousands, and Clarke his ten thousands.

XII

THE ETHICAL INTERPRETATION OF RELIGION—THE LIBERALISTIC MORALITY

MODERN liberalism offers an ethical interpretation of Christianity. Religion is interpreted as mere morality and is held to be of value only in so far as it is defined as such. Morality is, to say the least, considered of primary importance and religion is relegated to a secondary place, the question of faith and creed being believed to be inessential.

We shall here quote a number of liberalistic writers who testify to the fact that liberalism stands for an ethical interpretation of Christianity. Dr. K. C. Anderson, of Dundee, Scotland, says "According to Liberalism Christianity is an ethical system of teaching or precept, and Jesus Christ is the supreme teacher and moral and spiritual guide."[1] Again this writer says: "The liberal criticism of the Scripture has, in effect, reduced Christianity from the religion of redemption to an ethical system."[2] "If the different forms of liberal theology be compared," says the editor of one of the most prominent British theological journals, "it will be seen that, as orthodoxy is left behind, there is a gradual increase in the spiritual competence assigned to *man,* and a gradual decrease in the part assigned to the *saving power of God,* until we pass into what is almost pure moralism, in which the name of God is little more than the reminiscence of past development."[3] The modernized gospel, says Walter Rauschenbusch, "plainly concentrates religious interest on the great ethical problems

1 *The Monist,* 1915, p. 45.
2 The same, p. 66.
3 *The Hibbert Journal,* October, 1915, p. 10 seq.

of social life."[4] This writer shows further that the social gospel "deals with the ethical problems of the present life."[5]

It is seen, then, that modern religious liberalism is closely related to the Societies for Ethical Culture. The purpose and aim of these societies is to advance the cause of good morals. There is, in fact, no real difference between the message presented by the Ethical Culture Society leaders and that of the more radical liberalistic preachers who adhere to the ethical interpretation of Christianity. In the view of the Ethical Culture Societies, says Gustav Spiller, "no belief in a deity, no dogma, no authority is held superior to living the ethical life. The supremacy of ethics is the first doctrine taught."[6] One who attends the meetings of the Ethical Culture Societies and of the more radical liberalistic churches will be struck by the similarity of the messages of these institutions. True, the meetings of the Societies for Ethical Culture are not opened by prayer; it may be recalled, however, that the radical liberalistic preachers, though they offer "invocation," do not believe that prayer will be answered in any real sense; they do not believe in a God who answers prayer. The editor of the Unitarian organ states that Unitarians differ from the Ethical Culture Societies on this point. He asserts that the Unitarians hold a theistic position, that is to say, they believe in God, while the Ethicists do not. Then, however, the editor proceeds to give a definition of God which any representative of the Ethical Culture movement could subscribe to. He says Unitarians believe in God as the principle of life, the Presence who is eternally in, above and through the process of creation and who is indeed the process itself, growing from more to more, from imperfection to perfec-

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[4] *A Theology for the Social Gospel,* p. 15.
[5] The same, p. 16.
[6] *Faith in Man. The Religion of the Twentieth Century,* p. 187.

tion.[7] This definition shows that the dispute between the Unitarians and the said society is not worth while; it is, as a proverb has it, "a debate concerning the color of the emperor's beard." But while the liberal preachers, within and without the Unitarian connection, claim to be representatives of Christianity, the leaders of the Societies for Ethical Culture do not make any such claim. And, it should be added, these societies have practically no success in the attempt to win people for their cause; the number of their members is exceedingly small. On the other hand, the liberalistic preachers who defend the ethical interpretation of Christianity, to all appearance owe their small success to the fact that they claim to be representatives of Christianity and their societies to be Christian churches.

When we speak of the ethical interpretation of religion, the thought is not that liberalism interprets religion as *Christian* morality. In fact, modernism defends liberalistic ethical views which have resulted from a modernized theology. The rejection of the inspiration of Scripture has destroyed not only the foundation of the faith, but of sound morality as well. The theories of evolution and of divine immanence do not offer an adequate substitute for the Scriptures as a basis for moral principle.

The modern doctrine of God's immanence inevitably revolutionizes the Christian moral conceptions. "God is now recognized as immanent in all creation," says a writer in a prominent theological magazine, "things secular have disappeared because all things, in their time and place and proper proportion, have become holy."[8] While such is the opinion of this writer, there are, on the other hand, those who are aware that the very opposite is the case. Modern liberalism, under

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[7] *The Christian Register,* March 13, 1924, p. 245.

[8] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1916, p. 513.

the guise of making all things holy, has secularized all things. "The total secularization of all life seems to be the set program of the modern world,"[12] says George Burman Foster. Professor G. A. Johnston Ross demands even that the church "must secularize God."

Modern thought, however, not only accepts the view that all things have become holy, but we are told that all acts of men are holy as well. "If God alone is, and everything is God [or everything is the expression of an immanent God], vice is as divine as virtue, sin has no meaning and goodness no worth," says Alfred E. Garvie.[13] Dr. R. J. Campbell, the author of a number of theological books, said in a sermon:

> Sin itself is a quest for God — a blundering quest, but a quest for all that. The man who got dead drunk last night did so because of the impulse within him to break thru the barriers of his limitations, to express himself, and to realize the more abundant life. His self-indulgence just came to that; he wanted, if only for a brief hour, to live the larger life, to expand the soul, to enter untrodden regions, and gather to himself new experiences. That drunken debauch was a quest for life, a quest for God. Men in their sinful follies today, their trampling upon things that are beautiful and good, are engaged in this dim, blundering quest for God, whom to know is life eternal.

This is indeed a new doctrine. Not many years ago the editor of a well-known New York magazine which stands for religious liberalism, protested against the substitution of the modern view of divine immanence for omnipresence. In recent years belief in divine immanence has become quite common in liberalistic circles. A writer in *The Reformed Church Review* points out that open pantheism is current in the world today. "Within the Church we are a little more careful about our statements," this writer says further; "yet here, too, there is a pantheistic trend. We are bidden to seek

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[12] The same, p. 188.

[13] *The Christian Certainty Amid the Modern Perplexity*, p. 11.

comfort in the fact that we are all divine and that God is present in the whole world."[14]

It has been shown elsewhere that some of the fathers of liberalistic theology believed that there is no absolute truth, neither in theology nor in ethics. Now this is the view of the more advanced religious liberalism in general. Just as liberal theologians believe the Bible and Christian theology to be simply the result of man's thinking, they accept a similar view concerning morality also. To deny the divine inspiration of Scripture means that there is no absolute standard or norm for morality. Representatives of modern liberalism admit unhesitatingly that from their point of view there is no absolute right or wrong. Dr. James H. Tufts, head of the department of philosophy in the University of Chicago, says rightly: "The newer ethics is itself as yet uncertain of its categories. *It does not know exactly what justice* [i. e., right and wrong] *is*."[15] Other liberalistic teachers of ethics agree with this view. "Ethical precepts thus are made relative to human needs instead of being referred to any superhuman or pre-human source," says Gerald Birney Smith.[16]

This means, as the last named writer also points out, that moral principles and precepts are to be explained from the evolutionary point of view: that the moral law is man-made and that it may be abrogated and changed by man. Therefore, from the liberalistic point of view, to keep the moral law is not so important a matter, and transgression is not necessarily so serious as has been supposed and as Scripture declares. The cries, "Back to nature," "Trust your instincts" have followed in the wake of discarding divine authority. Sin, in modern theology, has become misfortune. It has lost its "exceeding sinfulness."

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14 *The Reformed Church Review*, 1918, p. 244.
15 *The Biblical World*, 1915, p. 13.
16 *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology*, p. 89.

The modern view of conscience deserves to be noticed here. Modernism regards conscience the product of evolution. Considered from the Biblical viewpoint conscience is a gift of God though to be a safe guide it needs to be enlightened by the Word and the Holy Spirit of God. The illuminated conscience has a real place in the Christian's guidance.

It is important to note that, a long period after the rise of religious liberalism, the supremacy of Christian ethics was not questioned. Those who denied Christ's deity recognized Him, nevertheless, as the perfect moral example, "the ideal man." But within the last twenty-five years the fact has been brought home to liberalists that, unless Christ was really divine, there is no good reason to believe that He never erred morally, or in other words, that He is the perfect moral example. If Christ was nothing more than a Jewish peasant, as some of the modernists have stated, it would follow that neither His teaching nor His example is above criticism. In that case it would be inconsistent to regard His precepts as obligatory for our age. Modern liberalism, in consequence, having discarded His deity, now openly denies His moral supremacy. The cry, "Back to nature," has been boldly raised where formerly Jesus was held up as the supreme teacher of morality. Indeed, naturalism, to be consistent, must fall back on natural impulses for a moral guide.

The result of the modern view of ethics is a general moral decline. The present evidences of moral deterioration are of such nature that they cannot be ignored. Many are the voices of protest, not only from orthodox Christian circles but from the ranks of religious liberalists as well.

Moncure D. Conway points out in his autobiography that modern science has discredited faith in the supernatural, but has failed to furnish a sufficient ethical —let alone religious—guide. He quotes his friend,

Professor Goldwin Smith, as foreseeing "fatal results to the next generation unless science can construct something to take the place of the failing religious conscience." This author also mentions the well-known fact that the freethinking scientist Herbert Spencer, in his later years, deplored the regrettable moral results of modern science. Bertrand Russell, another freethinker, says:

> Purposeless and void of meaning is the world which science presents for our belief. That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms [in other words, the result of blind force]; that nothing can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of modern genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins, — all these things, this author points out, are held, practically beyond dispute, by modern naturalistic science which he represented.[17]

"The poison of destructive Bible criticism," says the *Lutheran Observer,* "has gone into the magazines, popular novels, high schools, lecture platforms—among all classes of thinking people. *And it is bearing fruit in moral decline.*"[18] An eminent English writer declared that "the prevalence of agnosticism and skepticism as to all ethical principles" has resulted in "a well-nigh universal declension in morality which threatens to end in a total and permanent eclipse of the Sun of righteousness." Professor Guglielmo Ferrero, a well-known Italian scholar, said in 1913:

> All the scruples and inner restraints with which, in the past, religion chastened the inner conscience of man, have fallen away and our civilization, so splendid and wealthy, is threatened with submersion beneath the mighty avalanche

17 *Philosophical Essays,* p. 60 f.

18 Quoted *The Bible Champion,* March-April, 1917, p. 129.

of three vices: fraud, immorality, and the arrogance of power . . . . I do not wish to exaggerate the transgressions of our modern Babylon, after the manner of Catholic priests and Protestant clergymen. *It is nevertheless certain that modern civilization faces a grave crisis in the matter of morals.*

Dr. Howard A. Kelly, of Johns Hopkins University, distinguished as a scientist and surgeon, said in a lecture:

> Our country today is threatened with moral bankruptcy. I am not a pessimist or an optimist, but a steady searcher for truth as it exists. There are many indications of this moral degeneracy.

Doctor Yamei Kim, of the Pei-yang Woman's Medical School in China, on a visit to this country, remarked concerning the dress of women: "In big social gatherings in America and Europe I see many ladies wearing 'fast' dress. These ladies are vainly trying to show off their physical beauty, or suggest that they have it. It would be impossible for an Eastern woman of fine taste to wear the dress I often see in America and Europe." Dr. Winfield Scott Hall, a well-known Chicago physician, says of the dress of the modern woman: "Girls in their daily work, as well as women on the ballroom floor, have squelched their consciences and modesty to adopt the sensuous dress, with the result that immorality exists where otherwise there would have been decency and cleanliness."

Rabbi Wise of New York said (in 1914): "Nearly all men and women were shocked when the wretched modern dances were perpetuated for the first time. If one were to enter a New York ballroom today for the first time after ten years' absence he would be struck dumb with disgust and astonishment at the degeneration which has come to pass within a little time." The same writer speaks in this connection of "the widespread moral deterioration which we see about us, the general lowering of standards, the evidences of which

are many and multiplying."[19] Dr. John Haynes Holmes wrote:

Dancing today, even among our so-called "best people," is indecent. In watching a dancing party at a seacoast resort this past summer, we noticed all kinds of dances and postures which, in the settlement and community center dances in the New York slum districts, the chaperons are under strict orders to forbid as immoral. Nowhere in our social life today is there such evidence of degeneracy as on the dance floor. The music is barbaric, the dressing immodest, and the dances brutally sexual.[20]

Referring to the refusal of the Methodist Church to admit actors and actresses into membership, the same writer says in *Unity:*

On the other hand, however, we wonder if the actors and actresses of our time are wholly without blame. Are they not earning their living in the service of an institution which is rapidly sinking to the lowest depths of moral degradation? Are not men and women, supposedly respectable, appearing nightly in plays which outrage every decent instinct of human nature? Are not the members of the profession, in other words, aiding and abetting the debauchery of the commercial managers, by consenting to do for them their dirty work? One cannot touch pitch without being defiled. One cannot act in a disreputable play without one's self coming under suspicion of being a disreputable character.

A well-known secular magazine has the following in an editorial on the present-day theater:

To all but playgoers of the very newest generation there must occasionally come the thought that there has taken place a vast change in our toleration of things on the stage. The theatre does not hesitate nowadays to put into vivid representation topics and occurrences which the reviewer may well hesitate to mention by name in even the cold abstractness of type.

The ethical interpretation of religion, or the identification of religion with morality, is clearly the denial of the Christian teaching that true morality needs re-

19 *The Literary Digest,* January 31, 1914, p. 210.
20 *Unity,* September 23, 1920, p. 21.

ligion for a foundation. Liberalism, declaring that there is no religion but morality, makes morality its own foundation. Religion is disowned and a new morality substituted for the Christian morality. Modern moral teaching, with which religious liberalism is identified, finds itself in evident bewilderment. Religion, as defined by modernism, is nothing more than a name. It has been well said that men in our day cheerfully give up the substance but never the name of Christianity. "Religion in these days is the more praised as it is the more attentuated and dissolved," said William Hayes Ward, formerly editor of *The Independent*.[21] Another theological writer, Professor John A. W. Haas, says: "If, then, finally the authority of the message is gone, we are left without any authority, religion is adrift and optimism is a pure speculation. We are hastening through our modern liberalism into conditions of religious dissolution which no sentimentalist can deny."[22] Professor Walter Scott Athearn, of Boston University, speaks of "the present tide of indifference, luxury, and commercial greed," and remarks: "We are fast drifting into a cultured paganism.—In fifty years crime has increased four hundred per cent. Something must be done to underpin the virtues of our people."[23] Dr. Luther A. Weigle, Dean of Yale Divinity School, in a booklet on *The New Paganism, and the Coming Revival,* speaks of "the appalling prevalence of crime and immorality" at the present time. "Old conventions are shattered" he says, "restraints are denounced as unwarranted repressions of individuality; liberty is confounded with lawlessness. . . . Personal liberty, free expression is the cry of a jazz age which is fast losing all standards of goodness and beauty and truth."

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[21] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1909, p. 229.

[22] *The Lutheran Church Review,* 1917, p. 188.

[23] *Religious Education and American Democracy,* p. 11.

To conclude the subject of the New Morality we quote a noteworthy paragraph by Professor Stuart P. Sherman:

> The great revolutionary task of the nineteenth-century thinkers, to speak it briefly, was [considered to be] to put man into nature. The great task of the twentieth-century thinkers is to get him out again — somehow to break the spell of these magically seductive cries, "Follow Nature," "Trust your instincts," "Back to Nature." We have trusted our instincts long enough to sound the depths of their treacherousness. We have followed nature to the last ditch and ditch water.[24]

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[24] *On Contemporary Literature*, p. 10. In connection with the subject under consideration the book, *The Menace of Immorality in Church and State*, by Dr. John Roach Straton, deserves mention.

XIII

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

MODERN theology rejects the Bible teaching on man's sinfulness and the Biblical conception of sin and the world. The "exceeding sinfulness of sin," the existence of Satan and his kingdom, and the need of supernatural salvation are denied. For the Bible message of *personal* reconstruction the social gospel substitutes the call to *social* reconstruction.

Not long ago the General Secretary of Home Missions of one of the more prominent evangelical denominations in a public address set forth the nature and meaning of the social gospel, he himself being an ardent advocate of it. His address in substance follows:

The thought that there is a kingdom of evil besides the kingdom of God is all wrong. There is only one kingdom and every man is a citizen of it. Since there is only one immanent life force, the world is a unit and man also is a unit. There is no room therefore for the old conception of sin. Furthermore there should be no attempt made to draw a line of distinction between things religious and secular, holy and unholy, Christian and non-Christian, the church and the world. Sin is, in the last analysis, not a personal but a social evil. It is the result of improper social conditions. So long as our social order is not Christianized, sin will ever be present with us. It is impossible to lead a Christian life except in a Christianized society. Yet if we accept the thought of divine immanence, sin and evil cannot be quite so bad as they seem to be. Considered from the viewpoint of the social gospel the thought that God would damn a man because of sin is offensive.

Since man is inherently good and all men are God's children, there is in modern religion no place for individual salvation. The divine plan of salvation of which conservatives still speak is superstition. What is needed is not individual but social salvation. For although the world is God's kingdom, it does not follow that all is developed to perfection, or

is incapable of further improvement. Such a conception would not fit into the scheme of general evolution. Salvation has become a social term. It means that the world must be made better socially by reforms and social improvements of various kinds, by education and moral advancement.

In a word, the social gospel addresses itself to the task to make the world a decent place to live in. This is the business of the church in the new age. Considered in its true light this endeavor is essentially religious, it is the manifestation of true spirituality. What was formerly spoken of as religious is of value only in so far as it serves social ends. If my life is a unit, then all that pertains to my life is an object of the church's mission.

Such is the modern social gospel. The Biblical Gospel of salvation is "restated"; the Cross is given "a social interpretation." For true spiritual religion we are offered a substitute having no other purpose than to make the world a decent place to live in. The new gospel is the gospel of externalism. It is assumed that favorable external conditions will bring about the moral regeneration of society and that human nature will respond automatically to its better environment. Salvation is to come through civic, economic, social and political remedies. Certain defenders of the social gospel tell us that until a man's economic and social desires have been satisfied, it is both useless and illogical to preach to him morality and spirituality. To Christianize the social order, rather than the individual, is supposed to be the great task of the church.

The social gospel therefore lays enormous emphasis on a man's physical and material well-being. Religion is held to be nothing more than a plan for social welfare. Christianity, being considered a scheme of social improvement, is reduced to humanitarian and social endeavors. It is interpreted in terms of materialistic humanitarianism. Education and sanitation take the place of personal regeneration and the Holy Spirit. True spiritual Christianity is denied.

The social gospel is in fact religiously indifferent. It holds that the differences between Christianity and the non-Christian religions are in degree, not in kind. Yet the social gospel comes under the cloak of religion. We are told that the spirit of loyalty and devotion shown towards modern social endeavors deserves the name of religion and Christianity. "The man who enters thoroughly into the social movements of his time," says Professor Edward Scribner Ames, of the University of Chicago, "is to that extent genuinely religious, though he may characterize himself quite otherwise [i. e., though he may be an avowed unbeliever]. Nonreligious persons are accordingly those who fail to enter vitally into a world of social activities and feelings."[1] John Herman Randall says: "The simple fact is, we are living in an age that is fast becoming socialized from top to bottom, and individual religion, like individual ethics, must give way to broader and more social conceptions."[2] "The rapid and significant development of Christianity in the interests of what is called the 'social gospel,' " says Professor Gerald Birney Smith, of the University of Chicago, "is really part and parcel of a *humanizing of religious interest.*"[3]

The social gospel is proclaimed in numerous books and magazine articles as well as from many pulpits. Countless representatives of modern liberalism are defending it. "Our old religion was a process of saving a few souls here and there out of a world that we condemned as bad," says a prominent Methodist preacher of the State of New York; "the new religion is a community affair, and we will make our towns and our cities the right kind of places so that everybody will be a Christian as a matter of course. When it used to be hard to be good, it will become difficult to be bad." In-

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[1] *The American Journal of Theology*, 1908, p. 543.
[2] *Humanity at the Cross Roads*, p. 291.
[3] *The Biblical World*, May, 1919, p. 254.

dividual salvation is practically spurned and denied. A minister of a Unitarian church in New York said recently in a sermon: "No man is satisfactorily saved unless he is a member of a saved home; there cannot be a saved home unless there is a saved community, nor can there be a saved community until there is a saved world."[4] In other words, salvation is wholly a matter of social improvement.

Considering the question from the viewpoint of New Testament Christianity some fatal weaknesses of the social gospel are in evidence. Social betterment is excellent as the outgrowth and fruit of Christianity; the attempts to make it a substitute for the Christian religion have signally failed. The social gospel overlooks the fact that man's greatest needs are of a spiritual nature, and hence the greatest service to man is to supply these needs. The new gospel ignores the vital and fundamental issues that have to do with man's spiritual well-being and true betterment. The primary duty of the church, namely, to give spiritual food to the souls of men, is set aside. It is a wholesale effort for the improvement of mankind on the surface rather than for betterment in the mainspring of the heart where the seat of evil lies.

Christianity recognizes the fact that personal reconstruction through the Gospel is the greatest factor in bringing about real and lasting social betterment in the world. John Morley, a noted British author, gives the following significant testimony:

> We all have been upon the wrong track, and the result is that the whole of us have less to show for our work than one man, Booth [of the Salvation Army]. Herbert Spencer, Matthew Arnold, Frederic Harrison, and the rest of us who have spent our lives in endeavoring to dispel superstition and to bring on a new era, have to admit that Booth has had more direct effect upon this generation than all of us put together.[5]

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[4] Quoted in *Our Hope*, July, 1919.
[5] *The Harvard Theological Review*, July, 1916, p. 318.

The new gospel, then, fails to distinguish between *Christian* service and *social* service. But the two are not identical. The successful business man, or laborer, is rendering valuable social service though he may not be a Christian, or he may be a Christian only nominally and hence may be lacking the Christian motive that is essential to Christian service. It is quite true that the meanest manual labor is sanctified and becomes elevating when it is done from a Christian motive, "as unto the Lord." But this does not mean that such work is in itself of equal importance with the more direct Christian work which has to do principally with leading men to Christ and caring for their spiritual welfare. The Apostle Paul making tents in Ephesus did an important work. It enabled him to continue his labors to which the Lord had called him. But great would be the world's loss had Paul been of the opinion that secular work in itself is as important as the preaching of the Gospel, and had given his whole time and effort to tent-making and other kinds of social service. Had Paul even devoted the entire income from his business to Christian purposes, he would have made a mistake. It was not the work to which God had called him. Yet there are plenty of men who are called of God to make tents. If they do their work from the same motive as Paul did his work and are as faithful as Paul was, their reward in the day of Christ will be equal to that of Paul. Christian work done from the Christian motive must be distinguished from social service in which this motive is absent.

Another glaring weakness of the social gospel is that it does not address itself to all classes. If social service is the whole of Christianity, then those who are unable to render such service are deprived of the privilege of being Christians. The social gospel has no message for the halt and maimed, the suffering from cancer and tuberculosis; no message for the dying. To him

whose soul cries out for the living God the message of the new gospel is a mockery.

Professor Thomas N. Carver, a radical religious liberal, calls attention to another flaw in the gospel of social service, namely its indefiniteness. He points out that "under the old doctrine of salvation Christian work had a definite meaning. It meant saving souls . . . bringing them into the kingdom." He says further:

> It is not enough to preach the gospel of work unless you mention the job at which you expect people to work. Instead of merely saying, "Work, for the night is coming," it is necessary to be somewhat specific and say (if the metre can be fixed up), "Improve this road, for the night is coming. Build this bridge, for the night is coming. Drain this swamp. Improve this crop, for the night is coming."
>
> In the absence of some kind of doctrine of salvation work means little more than persuading people to join the Church. Under these conditions, the Church becomes very much like an initiation society, such as you would find in many colleges.[6]

The pastor of a Unitarian church — formerly a Presbyterian minister—wrote:

> Not very long ago the livest and most vigorous denominations had two objects, which really amounted to one, that were perfectly clear in their own consciousness and to the world, — the conversion to goodness of those who were not good, and the building up in goodness of those who had been converted. All their efforts were directed to the accomplishment of these definite ends. Their conception of what constitutes goodness and of the way to put one's self in possession of it was doubtless crude and in large measure mistaken. They had involved goodness in a network of abstruse theology. But nevertheless, sticking close to the Bible, as they understood it, they drew the people, held their grip on them and promoted real goodness in their lives. Fundamentally these forefathers were right. And they held the people because both they and the people knew that they were right. We *who have discarded conversion and growth in grace as outlandish absurdities, and the Bible too,* or at least have reduced them to the flabbiest kind of thing, who have left ourselves

[6] *The Harvard Theological Review,* July, 1915, p. 384.

without any clear object, who are driven hither and thither by every wind of doctrine and sleight of men, *are in mortal error, and the world knows it.*[7]

A reason why the social gospel is lacking in definiteness is that the task which it would lay upon the church is too extended in scope. Social service is a very broad term. A number of writers, as for example Professor Edward L. Earp, of Drew Theological Seminary, are of the opinion that the church should identify herself with the Rural Life Movement. To make the country church a success, we are told, the church must make it her business to build up a prosperous farming community. The rural preacher must be an agricultural expert. He must concern himself with the problems of better seeds, better breeds, better implements, and up-to-date methods of farming. As a prominent religious periodical summed it up some years ago, a minister should be trained to "save the crops of his people, as well as their souls." There have been arranged agricultural summer courses for ministers. "It is the plan to teach the rural pastors how they may help the farmers to get better crops by applying scientific methods," we read in a prospectus for such a course, "so that the farmers in return may learn better church-methods."

If it is the church's business, however, to teach agriculture to rural populations, can she consistently overlook the fact that the cities are teeming with those whose usefulness could be greatly enhanced by further training, and who also should be won for the church? —For the church to accept the modern program of social service would be not merely to neglect the work to which she is called, but it would mean that she become a "Jack of all trades and master of none"—a real obstacle to general efficiency. American agriculture must

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[7] *The Christian Register,* August 26, 1920, p. 12. Italics mine.

be in a bad way if the farmers need the ministers to teach them how to grow corn and raise hogs.

Rejecting, in short, the Christian view of man's sinfulness and of an evil world, the social gospel prescribes reformation as the needed remedy. Reformation and man-wrought changes are believed adequate to make the individual as well as the world all that is to be desired. Now it cannot be questioned for a moment that reform is good in its place. If a thief ceases to steal and begins to work for an honest living, he is doing a praiseworthy thing. Christianity does not hold the absurd view that the vicious and profligate are as desirable members of society as they who live honorable lives. But it is the church's business to stand for Christianization in the New Testament sense, not for mere reformation. A sinner who reforms is not for that reason a Christian. Reformation will not change the human heart. Regeneration is the work of God.

Walter Rauschenbusch has written *A Theology for the Social Gospel.* The title of this book is significant. The substance of its contents is not claimed to be *the* theology but *a* theology for the social gospel. This author's primary interest was the gospel of Socialism. Theology was to him, as it is to modernists in general, quite a secondary matter. In his view the value of the gospel is to be measured by the possible service it could be made to render to the social gospel. This new liberalistic theology is supposed to be a thing to be used rather than accepted as true.

Rauschenbusch's theology is by no means the foundation for his gospel, but is itself founded on the social gospel. He admits that some other theology could be built on the principles of Socialism and he knew that the great majority of Socialists do not accept his theology. In fact nearly all the leading Socialists, following in the footsteps of Carl Marx, their greatest representative, look upon all theology with contempt.

Rauschenbusch never made the claim that Socialism would not be successful without accepting his theology, but he hoped that his theology would aid the cause of Socialism by making it acceptable to professing Christians. In one instance he makes this honest confession: "Of course some of the ideas I have ventured to put down are simply a play of personal fancy about a fascinating subject."[8] All this means that "the theology for the social gospel" is not a matter of vital concern to the cause of Socialism nor to any other cause.

"The social gospel is believed by trinitarians and unitarians alike," says Rauschenbusch, "by Catholic Modernists and Kansas Presbyterians of the most cerulean colour. It arouses a fresh and warm loyalty to Christ wherever it goes, though not always a loyalty to the Church."[9] But since the social gospel, as represented by this author, rejects the deity of Christ, it is incorrect to say that it is accepted by trinitarians. Again, deny Christ's deity, and the Jesus you have left is not a person deserving loyalty. Could you honor as a leader a mere man who said in regard to his own person what Jesus said about Himself: "I am the light of the world—the way, the truth and the life—the living bread come down from heaven; before Abraham was I am; all power is given unto me in heaven and on earth," etc.? Would not one saying these things about himself, unless they are true, deserve sympathy and pity, rather than adoration?

Dr. Lyman Abbott, formerly editor of the *Outlook,* said that church attendance is not an index to religious interest, because men read religious articles in magazines and express their worship in social service. Indeed modern churchgoers are often told that social service is the leading interest of Christianity. It is generally known that in the modernized churches the em-

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[8] *A Theology for the Social Gospel,* p. 238.
[9] The same, p. 148.

phasis is laid on social service, reform, and morality. Addresses on subjects of this nature are largely taking the place of the sermon. May not this be one of the principal causes of the decline of church attendance? A layman writing in a theological magazine complains that the attempt of the church to "Christianize the social and civil life of the world," through social service, has resulted in the secularization of the church by the world. He says:

> The sacred edifice heretofore dedicated to the worship of Almighty God has now become the center of secular functions. We now go to church to hear sermons on the minimum wage, adequate housing of the poor, the regulation of moving pictures and the dance-halls, how to vote, and the latest vice-investigation report. Billiard and pool tables are being installed, dancing classes are organized, and all sorts of amusements offered to entice the youth within its sacred precincts.
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> Ministers of the Gospel are willing to preach on every subject under the sun except the Gospel, and when they begrudgingly mention the Gospel, they almost tell us it is not divine, but a man-made thing. They have relegated to the brush-heap most of the sacred doctrines and many of them even deny the validity of their own divine office as ministers of God. All comes from man, nothing from God. Perhaps this is the reason so many ministers look down on empty pews and complain bitterly that their members do not come to hear the sermons prepared with so much labor. [10]

A leading exponent of the social gospel, Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison, in an article published in a very widely read religious magazine of which he is the editor, contends that evangelical Christianity is in error in the assertion that "religion begins in the inner life." He believes that this old Biblical view, which is held by all evangelical Christendom, has had dire consequences as concerns world betterment. Religion, in his view, must begin and end with social endeavor. He is of the opinion that "the inner life" which evangelical Christianity emphasizes and which depends on Christian

10 *The Reformed Church Review,* April, 1916.

faith, is nonessential, if not actually detrimental to the cause of world regeneration. Again it may be observed in passing that the Bolshevists have gone a step farther and assert that the Christian faith is decidedly detrimental.

In the same place Dr. Morrison says that it is the business of the church to bring about the proposed new social and economic order, and that the church could not hope to succeed in such a task except by making the secular state do her bidding. Furthermore, he points out that the carrying out of such a program by the church "will put Christianity in an actual position of rivalry with the state for the rulership of this world."[11] In a union ministers' meeting, held in Chicago on December 28, 1936, Dr. Morrison stated that he "clearly foresees a time when a more unified Protestant church, conscious of its social role and totalitarian in its claims on human life, will clash with the political state."

We should like to raise the question whether Jesus commissioned His church to accomplish her task through the instrumentality of the secular state. Clearly, the proposed movement would not only be entirely unevangelical, (as Dr. Morrison actually admits), but, if successful, would mean the establishment of a state religion. It would mean persecution for dissenters, similarly as in Russia today, though carried on perhaps in the name of religion. It is an outstanding fact that many representatives of the social gospel sneer at the principle of the separation of church and state. The new gospel is dependent on the secular state for success. Faith and doctrine being considered inessential, the contemplated new order of society is believed to constitute the essence of Christianity and of the kingdom of God. The introduction of this proposed new order is supposed to mean the actual Christianization of communities and nations,

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[11] *The Christian Century,* September 26, 1934, p. 1206.

regardless of the personal attitude of individuals. Man's sinfulness and depravity is denied. Religion is to be secularized in all its concepts.

As we have seen, it is supposed by the heralds of the social gospel that sin attaches only to the social order. Sin is believed to be of a corporate nature. The fact of individual sin and personal guilt is to be ignored. The Christian conscience is to be silenced. The decalogue is to be abrogated. Trust in man is to be substituted for trust in God. The new kingdom of God will in fact be the kingdom of the natural man. The idea of personal salvation is ruled out of court. In the view of the defenders of the radical social gospel all men will be sinless after the establishment of the contemplated new social order.

As may directly be further indicated, repentance is no longer believed to be necessary. Certainly the preaching of repentance to those that are sinless would be uncalled-for. Now, the fact of the matter is that even in our day, when not so much as a beginning has been made in establishing a new order, the preaching of repentance is openly frowned at by some of the foremost advocates of the social gospel. Need it be said that this new gospel is in fact the total denial and repudiation, indeed it is a mockery, of the Christian message of salvation? And yet it is presented to the world under a Christian cloak.

Since the days of Walter Rauschenbusch this view of Christianization, and of repentance in particular, has been part and parcel of the social gospel. It is being vigorously advanced in various sections of the American church. In the conferences of the United Church of Canada, in 1936, a tendency was in evidence to treat "social renewal" as the content of evangelism and to interpret repentance in relation to wrong thinking concerning the nature of the kingdom of God. Repentance then simply means regret that the new kingdom of God

is so slow in coming, because Christendom by and large does not approve of the social gospel and of the new concept of the kingdom. E. Stanley Jones, in an article entitled "Afterthoughts on the Preaching Mission," printed in the Christian Century (April 14, 1937), says that "to appeal to this generation to repent of individual sin is to get but feeble response." He adds that regret for neglect to build the kingdom of God on earth has a marked appeal.

In connection with the article of Dr. Jones the editor of the same journal says: "Instead of offering something called 'salvation' to a man in his detachment [that is to say, as an individual, outside the new kingdom of God] Dr. Jones discovered in his Preaching Mission experience that the way to reach him is to work 'backward,' so to speak, from the social order to the individual person." In other words, repentance is to be interpreted to mean regret for failing to bring about the inauguration of the new kingdom of God. The same editor says further that the old-time sense of individual sin has (in liberalistic circles) almost died out, but the sense of corporate sin is increasing. Again, it is interesting to notice a statement made by Professor Reinhold Niebuhr, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, concerning the message given by Dr. Jones in the National Preaching Mission (1936). Referring to Dr. Jones' message, Professor Niebuhr says: "But to preach this simple kind of moralism is to perpetuate the errors of American Christian liberalism and to confuse our generation."[12] A writer in *The Christian Century* (July 14, 1937) suggests that "since the discovery of the new evangelism has been made public by the Preaching Mission sponsored by the Federal Council, the call for hymns that would sing the new evangelism could appropriately be sent out by the Council." He

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[12] *Radical Religion,* vol. 2, No. 2, page 3.

adds that he has such a book of hymns in preparation. From the expressions by Reinhold Niebuhr, quoted above, one might be led to believe that he stands on the whole with fundamental believers for the defence of the historic Christian faith. Professor Niebuhr would not make such a claim even though he finds fault with the popular type of religious liberalism. Here is another of his noteworthy statements: "Neither a more perfect rationality (education) nor a more perfect social organization can eliminate the source of anarchy and perennial evil in the human heart."

In recent years the advocacy of the social gospel ("the social interpretation of Christianity") has become popular in American Christendom. The social gospel has made great headway in most of the more prominent denominations. The abolition of capitalism and the elimination of the profit system from the economic order have been demanded by representative bodies of various denominations as the principal requirements of the social gospel. While it is clear that these objectives are to be gained principally through efforts to be put forth by the state, the advocates of the social gospel have failed to tell us what steps they would propose that the state should take toward carrying out such a task.

It is remarkable indeed that until a very recent date, namely the time of the organization of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, none of the defenders of the social gospel seemed to be able to tell us how, or by what means, their program — if their vague projects may be called a program — could be carried into practice. Of the various ecclesiastical bodies which have passed resolutions favoring the abolition of capitalism and the profit system, not one has indicated definitely what steps are to be taken toward this end. It should be remembered that in the strict sense every one who does not see himself compelled to

live "from hand to mouth," but has laid up something for a rainy day, is a capitalist.

And as concerns the question of the elimination of the profit motive from the economic order, the need of definitions is even more urgent. Clearly the profit system could be abandoned only if there were a possibility to establish Communism. The idea that the profit motive is contrary to Christian principles is untenable. Is it not right that the labor of the working man be motivated by a desire for gain? Is he not worthy of his hire? Is not the farmer, the business man, worthy of a gain or profit? The Scriptures, as a matter of fact, teach the principle of stewardship. While it would be useless to preach Christian stewardship to those making no Christian profession, there is absolutely no excuse, even from the viewpoint of mere right and morality, for amassing wealth from the toil of underpaid workers.

The Christian who is in reality "a doer of the word," considers himself as the Lord's steward as concerns material resources placed at his disposal, as well as relates to every talent entrusted to him. His aim is to fulfill in deed and in truth the command of loving God supremely and his neighbor as himself. To him who is truly the Lord's steward there is indeed a higher motive back of the motive of material profit or gain. Many professing Christians prove themselves to be faithful stewards of the Lord. Yet, it cannot be gainsaid that the church by and large is falling short by far in this respect. Even those who are Christian believers in the true sense often fail to meet their obligations and make faithful use of their opportunities as stewards of the Lord. There is the common danger of lukewarmness in the service of the Lord and of taking too materialistic a view of life. Through human weakness the willingness for sacrificial service to Christ by service, both spiritual and material, rendered our neighbor, often fails to be in evidence. Obviously a Christian congre-

gation failing to take care of its own poor neglects its plain obligations.

Social service as a substitute for the old Gospel message has been tried out by Unitarians and other liberal churches. There is abundant proof to show that it has utterly failed, a fact that is persistently ignored by its present advocates. The churches which have embraced the social gospel, says a writer in the *Harvard Theological Review,* "have distinctly weakened their life and influence."[13] A writer in the *Biblical World* says:

> The secularization of the activities of the church has weakened its spiritual life and emptied its pews of devout worshipers.—Today altruism has largely superseded churchly Christianity, and social service in a very material manner has made many churches in our land a social club or an executive committee for the engineering of social activities.[14]

A prominent Unitarian minister wrote:

> During my sixty years of service in the Unitarian ranks *I have seen scores of organizations go down to defeat* because they did not make religion the one all-important element in their work and in their appeal to the public. Let me cite instances of this kind. A minister and his wife took charge of a Unitarian church that was fairly prosperous and immediately threw themselves with ardor into every available kind of social service. Among other good things they organized an unsectarian literary club which attracted some of the best people in the city. Some years after, the minister's wife was eagerly telling me of the wonderful success of the club, when I asked, "How about the church?" "Oh, that is closed," was the answer.[15]

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[13] *The Harvard Theological Review,* July, 1916, p. 314.

[14] November, 1914, p. 312.

[15] *The Christian Register,* November 14, 1918, p. 6.

XIV

RELIGIOUS DEMOCRACY, THE DENIAL OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

DEMOCRACY means the rule of the people, in contrast to autocracy, the rule of a king or prince. But what is *religious* democracy?

Religious democracy does not mean the right of self-government for the church, it does not mean congregational (sometimes called democratic) church government. In the sense in which this term is now often used by representatives of modernism *religious* democracy means the abolition of the rule of God in the religious realm, just as *political* democracy means the deposing of a king, or the renunciation of his authority in the political realm. As in a truly democratic state the king, if there be a king, has been democratized and has only such authority as the citizens of the state may see fit to grant him (in other words, he is a king in name only), so religious democracy demands that the ruler—God—must be democratized. Modernism undertakes to take from Him His power and authority. It is an attitude similar to that of the servants in the parable: "We will not have this one to reign over us."

It may be superfluous to repeat here that, according to Scripture teaching, God is the Creator and Ruler of the Universe. The human family divides itself into two classes, as concerns their relationship to God as His subjects. The sinner is in rebellion against God; yet God has authority over him. There is for him a day of reckoning coming. The true subject of God is the one who has become His child by regeneration. It is true, therefore, that God in His kingdom rules "with the consent of the governed." Those who do not give

their consent to His rule are not His true subjects; they are outside of His kingdom. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that God does not derive His power and authority to rule from the governed. In other words, His kingdom is not a democracy; it is necessarily a holy autocracy. This, by the way, does not mean that there is any room for priestcraft or priestrule. While our Lord has given His church a degree of authority, it is to be remembered that the church, in the language of Scripture, is the body of believers.

The fact deserves notice that the sphere of the state is quite different from that of the church. Its task does not concern the salvation and spiritual welfare of mankind, not the spreading of the Gospel or the administration of church government. Its work is confined to the sphere of civil government and morality. While it is true that religion is the true foundation for morality, the maintenance and propagation of religion is not within the proper sphere of the state. The state's business is the regulation of civil affairs, the protection of the law-abiding, the punishment of evildoers, the repression of vice. A union of church and state is inconsistent both with New Testament Christianity and with true democracy. The state is an institution of God in the sense that He has ordained its existence and it is His will that they who are citizens of His kingdom render willing obedience to the state (provided always that the state does not exercise tyranny over the conscience). Yet the fact remains that the state is not, and from the nature of things cannot be, established on the same basis as the church. The state is not and does not pretend to be the kingdom of God. The church, on the other hand, is God's kingdom (in its present form) to the extent that it measures up to the New Testament standard; in other words, to the extent that God rules it and has His own way with it. This means that while the kingdom of God is not identical with the church, it is within the

visible church. The church, then, is established on a religious, spiritual basis; the state is founded on the principles of morality, of legal right, of righteousness.

The word democracy is derived from *demos,* which means the people. A modern democracy is a rule of the people; the people have it in their power to elect their own lawmakers and officers for the administration of the government in accordance with the law.

Strictly speaking, the people in a modern democracy are ruled by their representatives in office. Nevertheless the term democracy is properly applied, provided that the representatives truly represent the people and unselfishly serve the people's interests. Self-seeking motives, partisanship, bossism, corruption, "mobbings" in a democratic state are indications that democracy has not yet passed the experimental stage. Corruption in politics means autocracy of the most objectionable type. It is true that general education of the citizens is needful in a democracy; the supposition, however, that secular education will suffice to qualify for citizenship and for the administration of government has proved erroneous. Democracy depends for success primarily on the moral character of the citizens. So long as among the citizens of a state there may be those who lack in moral qualities, there is a possibility that such may be entrusted with responsible positions. While the state cannot demand Christian qualifications on the part of its officers, it is clear that only men of integrity and satisfactory moral character can consistently serve in civil offices.

As for the administration of the affairs of the church there is no ground, Scriptural or other, for entrusting it to an ecclesiastical ruler, or, for that matter, to a few such rulers. If religious democracy meant the rejection of ecclesiastical autocracy, it would be decidedly acceptable. What it does mean in the language of modernism is the denial of the rulership of God, particu-

larly His sovereignty in the sphere of religion, the rejection of the fundamental truth of God's sovereignty.

Modernism demands a democratized God. The well-known theologian of religious democracy, Walter Rauschenbusch, tells us we must save God by democratizing Him. "The worst thing that could happen to God," this writer says further, "would be to remain an autocrat while the world is moving toward democracy. He would be dethroned with the rest [of the rulers]."[1] President Arthur Cushman McGiffert, of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, says: "Democracy demands a God with whom men may co-operate, not to whom they must submit."[2] "The principle of democracy," says Professor Errett Gates, of the University of Chicago, "arose first of all in the political sphere, but it was found to be equally applicable in the religious sphere."[3] Dr. Frank Crane says in a magazine article: "Are we to go on regarding God as an absolute monarch when the idea of absolute monarchy has been discarded among men?" Dr. Henry Frederick Cope, the General Secretary of the Religious Education Association, in his book *Education for Democracy,* describes religion as "gradually emerging from the notion of a dictator deity to the leadership of a splendid Brother in the great Human family." "The democratizing of religion," says Professor Herbert Alden Youtz, of the Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin, "is one of the significant processes that is taking place just now at an unprecedented rate."[4] This author proceeds to point out that this democratizing means a radical transformation in our very conception of religion or in "our way of conceiving the living God and His relationship to our world." Again he says:

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1 *A Theology for the Social Gospel,* p. 178.

2 *Religious Education,* June, 1919, p. 161.

3 *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 437.

4 *Democratizing Theology,* p. 4.

Our Christologies and our doctrines of God are being democratized.—There is a superficial way in which a man may democratize his theology by going over it and substituting for the Monarch God, a democratized divine Ruler; substituting a Republic of God for a Kingdom of God. This is necessarily an artificial thing to do.[5]

Professor Gerald Birney Smith shows that religious democracy does not accept beliefs or practices imposed from above.[6] This means that modernism rejects authoritative revelation. Various liberal theologians have pointed out that modern thought, accepting God's immanence, objects to the idea of a Father God. The new world-order, in their opinion, demands a God who is nothing beyond a "comrade in the struggle of the race," as Professor Albert Parker Fitch says, or, more accurately, one whose comrades we become by working for social ends. And yet the doctrine of God's fatherhood was only recently very popular in liberalistic circles.

The advocates of the demand that God must be democratized do not believe in God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture. They accept the modern idea of an immanent God.[7] The God of modernists is not a personal Being. He is not distinct from the world but is a part of it. When they speak of God they evidently mean either a blind cosmic energy or a mere concept of the mind. In their opinion God is the product of our own thought and imagination; He exists only in our own mind and is, as it were, what we may see fit to make Him. Professor Roy Wood Sellars, of the University of Michigan, says: "All of man's ideas are human ideas, and so his ideas of his God and the very personality and moral outlook of that God reflect the social standards which are in force around the individual."[8]

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[5] *Democratizing Theology*, p. 5.
[6] *The Biblical World*, November, 1919, p. 637.
[7] On the close connection between the doctrine of immanence and the idea of religious democracy cf. Dr. Gerald Birney Smith, *Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion*, p. 517.
[8] *The Next Step in Religion*, p. 161.

Says Walter Rauschenbusch: "The conception of God held by a social group is a social product." And again: "Our consciousness [or conception] of God is the spiritual counterpart of our social consciousness."[9]

It is strange, is it not, that a man of Walter Rauschenbusch's erudition, in order to make Christianity acceptable to the defenders of the social gospel, can forget himself to such extent as to say that God must be saved by democratization, and unless this is done, the world will dethrone Him. But to democratize God means nothing less than to dethrone Him, unless it be supposed that God, like vain man, would be willing to occupy the throne while He is shorn of that for which the throne stands, namely of His power and authority. To democratize God is, as John Haynes Holmes rightly says, "to shift the basis of religion from God to man"; it is to accept a humanitarian instead of a theistic basis for religion. In its last essence this can mean only one thing, namely the denial of God. The God of our fathers is dethroned—speaking now from the viewpoint of the representatives of religious democracy—and, as a recent writer said, He is replaced *by a God elected on a platform of approved social and political ideals.*[10]

Can there be an excuse, we must ask, for representatives of religious liberalism still to use the name of God and claim to be theologians, when their god is a mere concept of the mind? The God of modernism is a being which comes, as it were, under the guise of God, proclaiming that the basis of religion is in man and that there is no other God but man and his great ideas. Is it possible that the belief in such a god as that is supposed to justify the term *religious* democracy?

The question is here pertinent: How can modern religionists worship a God whom they have, suppositive-

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9 *A Theology for the Social Gospel,* pp. 167 and 179.
10 *The Unpartizan Review,* January-February, 1920.

ly, democratized? Some of them, be it said to their credit, have declared that they cannot. A modernist who is a member of an evangelical church says: "Personally I have gotten to the point where I regard all worship as idolatry."[11] The denial of a personal, almighty God makes worship indeed idolatrous. The representatives of modernism fail to give us a good reason why a democratized God should be worshiped. Such worship, being of an idolatrous nature, cannot be taken seriously. Necessarily it has degrading results.

To democratize God is to discard true religion. The representatives of religious democracy hold that democracy itself is religion and that it is the only religion that is worth while; there is, in their opinion, no religion but democracy. This is the denial of religion. We are told that there is no difference between democracy and *religious* democracy, and that the former is identical with the latter. "Democracy is a social faith; it is a religious faith," says Professor Theodore Gerald Soares of the University of Chicago.[12] Gerald Birney Smith is of the opinion that "*the triumph of democracy is now the chief concern of the church* and all theological training should be to that end."[13] "I worship God," says Professor George Albert Coe, of the Union Theological Seminary, "who, breathing himself everywhere into the human clod, makes it a spirit, a social craving, even the spirit of humanity, yes, the spirit of a possible world society. *I bow my spirit before the Spirit of the world democracy that is to be.*"[14] Dr. Coe and other writers on the subject have discarded the use of the phrase "kingdom of God" in favor of "democracy of God." But is not this a misnomer? If the democratizing process include God Himself; if religious democ-

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[11] *Friends' Intelligencer,* September 6, 1919.
[12] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1919, p. 124.
[13] *The Biblical World,* May, 1918, p. 302. Italics mine.
[14] *Religious Education,* October, 1916, p. 379. Italics mine.

racy be simply democracy, it is difficult to see a good reason for speaking of the democracy of God.

Religious democracy is closely related to the so-called social Christianity. Edward Scribner Ames says rightly that modern religion "is referred to as the religion of the spirit, as social Christianity, and as the religion of democracy."[15] The opinion that democracy is religion is founded partially on the claim that Jesus was "the first great democrat," and that the burden of His message was the establishment of a proper form of civil government. Walter Rauschenbusch intimates that had Jesus lived for thirty years longer He would presumably have been more successful in that which He undertook to do.[16] There is no objection to the idea that all men are in a sense religious; it is quite a different matter, however, to identify religion with democracy and assert that all men, being religious, are democratic in sentiment. Those who make such assertions would do well to remember that not all countries have a democratic government.

While Walter Rauschenbusch and other representatives of religious democracy commend worship and sanction the existence of the church, they do not hold that the church should be a permanent factor in a true democracy. The church, in their opinion, is useful only as a possible medium to educate the masses into a democracy such as they desire. A true democracy, they believe, has no need for the church as a separate organization. They favor an ultimate union of religion and state. Their position on this point, however, differs radically from the older state-churchism of Europe in which state and church, though closely united, were separate organizations. It should be observed that, if God is democratized and there is no religion but democracy, the existence of a particular religious organ-

[15] *The New Orthodoxy*, p. 10.
[16] *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, p. 266.

ization is uncalled-for; it is in fact precluded. For a democratic state of that description it would be inconsistent to permit various religious organizations within its borders. "Both dogmatism [speaking of evangelical Christianity] and ecclesiasticism [i. e., insistence on the right of religious organization] are in their inmost nature sectarian," says Professor Coe; "they have always divided Christians from one another." Religious democracy, it is supposed, cannot tolerate anything that divides people. It is needful therefore, the same author insists, that we advance "to a fully social position,"[17] that is to say, a position which ultimately knows neither dogma nor church. This author says further, "A particular religious fraternity within the community, though its doors be wide open to everybody, is not, and cannot be, the solution of this problem."[18]

Religious democracy, as advocated by many liberalistic writers, does not make a distinction in principle between Christian and non-Christian, believer and unbeliever, saint and sinner; hence it can well spare the services of the church. We again let the defenders of a "democracy of religion" speak for themselves. Henry T. Hodgkin, a prominent British "Friend" of the liberalistic type, says:

> The point at which to begin is the basal conviction that every man is essentially religious.[19]—It is true that there are people who say quite positively that they are not religious, that they do not know this instinct, etc. It may fairly be asked, however, whether this apparent absence of a "religious instinct" is not due to a complete misconception of religion—the very misconception we are here seeking to remove.[20]—Religion is a necessary part of every man's life. That is not to say that every man is religious in the conventional sense—far from it, thank God! It simply means that any idea of

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[17] *A Social Theory of Religious Education,* p. 262.
[18] The same, p. 323.
[19] *Lay Religion,* p. 54.
[20] The same, p. 195.

religion which is limited to the few [the Christian believers for example] is, from the nature of the case, false.—*Democratic religion . . . claims sinner not less than saint.*[21]

It follows that there is no longer a real need for the existence of the church.

Religious democracy, or social Christianity, demands that our religious institutions must ultimately be brought under community control. Joseph Ernest McAfee, who is holding an important office in a religious organization and is the author of a book on *Religion and the New American Democracy,* says:

> If American society perfect its democracy, its religious institutions must come under community control. This implies that all sect labels must come off and sectarian control must be abolished. This is essential from the point of view of democracy. Enlightened Christian forces should join with democracy to transform the present order and abolish the sectarian system.[22]

These sentences might be taken to mean that all Christian sects should be asked to unite into one religious body. This is not the opinion advocated by this author, however. His demand goes much farther. Hear him:

> Sectarianism would not be abolished with the merging of all Christian sects into one. That might only aggravate its evils. A strong sect can do more mischief than a weak one. What democracy needs to complete its program, and what Christianity needs for its emancipation, is the abolition of the whole sect program and the eradication of the whole sectarian principle and spirit.

This means, as this author takes pains to point out, that the Christian church as an institution or organization must cease to exist. "A real world-society is not possible with a divisive, competing, warring religious society," says Dr. Henry F. Cope.[23] President Mc-

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21 The same, p. 32. Italics mine.
22 Article *"Can Christianity Tolerate the Church?"* in *The New Republic,* January 18, 1919.
23 *Religious Education,* 1919, p. 223.

Giffert writes: "Democracy demands the abandonment of this traditional notion of religion and the recognition of it as a communal affair having to do with the salvation of the community, that is, in ordinary language, with the establishment of true liberty and human brotherhood."[24]

One would suppose that "social Christianity" and "religious democracy" stand for toleration and not for religious tyranny. The contrary is true, however, as may presently be shown. The charge of intolerance is sometimes made against evangelical Christianity. We readily admit that the Christian church cannot take the position of general toleration in the sense that she could ignore the difference between the Bible faith and the modern rejection of the faith. That every man has a right to his own religious belief is true in the sense that the truth must not and cannot be forced upon any one. As citizens of a free state we properly demand and concede the right of religious liberty. But this does not mean that the church should take an attitude of indifference and neutrality toward the Christian faith, or that believers could religiously fellowship nonbelievers. President George E. Horr recently remarked: "It is frequently said that a man has a right to think as he pleases. That is just what no living soul has any right to do. His only right is to think according to the facts of the case and according to the laws of thought." No one, in fact, has a right to think wrongfully and come to hurt. But, on the other hand, the fact must be recognized that truth cannot be instilled by any other means than teaching and persuasion. The attempt to spread the truth by coercion or persecution is contrary to Christian principles. Evangelical Christendom demands of the state general toleration on the basis of free citizenship. But, as already said, the fact must not be overlooked that the church cannot take the position that all

[24] The same, June, 1919, p. 161.

men, whether they are believers or not, have a right to membership in the church, or that ministers of the church may preach modernism. Such a position would make the church lose its Christian character. Even the Masonic Order is reckoning with the fact that not all men stand for Masonic principles. And the Unitarians do not and cannot fellowship those who insist on Scriptural orthodoxy. This is not intolerance. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?"

Evangelical Christianity, then, is identified with the principle of liberty of conscience and of general toleration within the sphere of the state. The state cannot consistently espouse the cause of any particular religious sect; it cannot assume the task of the church. For the state to admit only Christian professors to citizenship would be as inconsistent as if the church opened her doors to non-Christians or, in other words, if she discarded the faith.

The representatives of modernism would have us believe that evangelical orthodoxy is antagonistic to democracy. Now if by "democracy" they mean *religious* democracy, as this term is used by modernists, we willingly concede this point. Liberalistic leaders do not properly distinguish between religious democracy and political democracy, and therefore decry the Bible faith as the enemy of democracy. According to Professor William Frederic Bade, of the Pacific School of Religion, the orthodox view of the authoritative nature of Scripture "is the last bulwark of autocracy."[25] Professor Gerald Birney Smith says:

> *An autocratic* [i. e., evangelical] *religion cannot prepare citizens for democracy.*—If, submitting to the authority of Scripture, we are training men to think of Christianity as something unchangeably there by divine decree . . . we are training men in autocracy.[26]—We cannot maintain one kind of authority in our political life and a totally different kind of

[25] *The American Journal of Theology*, 1919, p. 234.
[26] *The Biblical World*, July, 1919, p. 422.

authority in religious life unless we wish religion and democracy to be mutually distrustful. To insist on blind submission in religion is a spiritual preparation for blind submission to autocratic power in the state; it is fundamentally opposed to the ideals of democracy.[27]—A church that holds to orthodox views belongs to the old regime rather than to the age of democracy.[28]

This means that representatives of religious liberalism denounce orthodoxy as the enemy of democracy and claim that evangelical Christians who accept the Scriptures as God's Word are not truly democratic. It is insinuated by modernists that orthodox believers reason in a fashion something like this: God, the Allmighty, All-wise, All-loving, All-righteous, has autocratic power, therefore there ought to be on earth autocrats who lord it over their fellows. It is assumed by representatives of modernism that those who recognize the sovereignty of God and teach unquestioning submission to Him, cannot be truly democrat in sentiment. Is not this a most outlandish insinuation? Or, is it true that the evangelical Christians of our land cannot consistently support our democratic institutions? Do they favor autocratic government? Is not the contrary true, that the very backbone of true democracy are the ones who, instead of attempting the democratization of God, willingly submit to His sovereignty? Is not democracy a miserable failure where the belief in a sovereign God is banished from the people's thought? Does not Russia at the present time give us an object lesson showing the real meaning of the democratization of God? The supposition that, since there ought to be no autocracy on earth, it follows that God also should be shorn of autocratic power, is absurd.

Religious democracy, in short, demands of us that we renounce the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ. It would assign to our Lord

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[27] *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1917, p. 346.
[28] *The Biblical World*, May, 1919, p. 255.

the office of mere democratic leadership. "What kind of a leader do we need?" asks Henry T. Hodgkin, and his answer is: "Viewed from the standpoint of democracy, we may say that we need a leader who is one with the led, not coming from above but raised from the ranks, and that he must be the servant of the community, not its 'boss.' "[29] The same writer says, the orthodox view of Jesus Christ involves that "He is not one of us." "Such a leader," he says further, "cannot be in a real sense a part of our everyday life, still less can He be the servant of the community."[30] This is the oft repeated liberalistic claim that we must "make Jesus real" by denying His deity. It is argued that a divine Jesus is not "one of us." This claim rests on the false premise that Jesus was not both human and divine. But Scripture teaches that Christ was human ("one of us") as well as divine, very man and very God. It is impossible to accept the opinion that a merely human, failing Jesus would be more real. Dean Shailer Mathews has well said on this point: "We can never make Jesus real by reducing him to the level of people with whom we gossip over our back-yard fence."[31] This statement is all the more remarkable because Dr. Mathews does not defend the orthodox doctrine of the deity of Christ, though obviously he perceives that, even from his point of view, the process of "humanizing" Jesus has been carried too far.

The thought that a democratic leader, instead of a divine Savior and Redeemer, is needed, is quite unacceptable. Even the atheistic, antireligious social democrats of Europe admire Jesus as a (supposed) democratic leader. If Jesus were nothing beyond that, it would be difficult to see why so much should be made of His leadership. Unprejudiced Socialists admit that

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29 *Lay Religion,* p. 182.
30 The same, p. 183.
31 *The Biblical World,* May, 1920, p. 226.

Carl Marx and August Bebel were greater leaders in the field of politics and Socialism than Jesus. It is, therefore, difficult to see why men who see in Jesus nothing more than a leader of democracy, cling to the Christian name. Modernists would have us profess Christianity but deny the Lordship of Christ; they ask us to renounce the Lordship of the Master, but cling to the ethical leadership of Jesus of Nazareth.

Now a true believer in our Lord, who has been saved through His grace, will at any time lay down his life rather than deny the faith by renouncing the Lordship of the Savior. Not only must the believer realize that without Christ's divine Lordship there could not be salvation, but he will count the unconditional surrender to Him his greatest privilege, the only true freedom. The Apostle Paul loved to refer to himself as a bondservant, literally a "bondslave" of his Lord, and again he refers to Him in the well-known words: "Whose I am, and whom I serve." Christianity minus faith in Christ as the divine Redeemer, minus recognizing His Lordship, is necessarily either laughing stock for the prince of darkness, or it is a mighty tool in his hands.

From the view that evangelical Christianity is antagonistic to true democracy there is only a short step to the demand that orthodox Christianity should not be tolerated in a modern democracy. Such demands have in fact been made and apparently, without a protest by representatives of modernism. "A humanist's religion," observes Professor Roy Wood Sellars, "can admit no cunning division into the things which are God's and the things which are Caesar's."[32] Joseph Ernest McAfee says:

> No one who believes in essential Christianity should resist the process of bringing our religious institutions under community control.—Religion, like every other universal human concern, must be brought under community control,

[32] *The Next Step in Religion*, p. 213.

if democracy is fully to vindicate itself. A church bearing a sect name and exploiting society in the interests of a sect idea cannot be tolerated by a thoroughgoing democracy. Religion is too vital a social function for its institutions to be monopolized by private corporations.[33]

The program of the more advanced modernism, then, provides for a liberalistic state religion, a union of religion and state. It will be recalled that such was also the position of Carl Marx and other Socialist leaders. The new state religion is to comprise Christians, non-Christians and atheists — anti-Christians — alike. Yet it is to be by no means doctrinally indifferent. An organization that stands for the democratization of God and the denial of Christ's Lordship is naturally inimical and hostile to Christianity. No believing Christian could join himself to a religious world society of this character.

Dr. McAfee, it is interesting to notice, based his demand for the abolishment of the Christian church on the claim that Christianity will fare better if the church can be eliminated. The church, he thinks has a "demoralizing" effect on Christianity. "In the nature of the case," he says, "an ecclesiastical organization cannot serve the purpose for which Christianity is in the world. Being a spirit and not an institution, the attempt to institutionalize Christianity sacrifices its genius. — An official Christian Church by its very nature must be un-Christian."[34] In other words, the attempt is made to justify the proposed suppression of the Christian church on the supposition that the elimination of the church would prove a blessing. Now this was essentially the position of the persecutors in all ages. Even Nero claimed he was doing a good work by putting to death all Christians. In the dark ages the persecutors advanced precisely the same argument as the modern representatives of religious democracy. They claimed that great benefit

33 *The New Republic*, January 18, 1919.
34 The same, January 18, 1919.

to society in general would result if the persecuted ones, instead of suffering for their faith, would accept the faith of the dominant authorities. Therefore persecution was believed to be justified.

Is it not strange indeed that they who claim to represent democracy and toleration propose the suppression of the Christian faith? And at the same time representatives of religious liberalism accuse the defenders of the old Bible faith of intolerance. Dean Shailer Mathews brands the Christian believers of the Biblical type, as represented by the Bible Schools, as *reactionaries* and says, if their efforts should succeed, "Protestantism would become dangerous to intellectual and religious liberty."[35] It is the old story. Evangelical Christianity, insisting on the right to stand for definite doctrine, is accused of an attitude that is inimical to religious liberty. The fact is willfully overlooked that influential modernists are favoring the suppression of the church and of the Christian faith as well as of every other religious creed. Religious democracy — modernism — and general socialization are to be established by secular means. Religion is to be "placed under community control."

While noted modernists in the church accuse the fundamentalists of opposing religious liberty, for the reason that they do not recognize modernism as identical with the Christian faith, it is interesting to notice that not all liberalists share the opinion of Dean Shailer Mathews on this point. Henry Neumann, of the Ethical Culture Society, wrote:

> The fundamentalists are not trying to suppress freedom of pulpit speech. They are doing the very different thing of demanding consistency within their own churches. The fundamentalists do not attempt to forbid the liberal preacher to speak. The preacher is free to utter his ideas anywhere that he pleases, with one exception. He is asked not to utter them

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[35] *The Biblical World,* April, 1917, p. 202.

in a church whose purity of doctrine the church authorities are expected to safeguard. A Unitarian church, I imagine, would not be content to remain long under a pastor who would come to share the religious beliefs of a Bryan or a Papini. The fundamentalist is no different. He holds that you may think that Jesus was as much a mortal being as Lincoln. Believe and say so if you will, but not in a church which is dedicated to the idea that Jesus was the only Son of God.[36]

[36] *The Christian Register,* March 13, 1924, p. 245.

XV

THE NEW VIEW OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE Christian church has always regarded Christian nurture and education as one of her chief interests. No words need be lost here concerning its importance. Modern liberalism has substituted *religious* education for *Christian* education. While it is true that in conservative circles the term religious education is sometimes used synonymously with Christian education, in general modern usage religious education has acquired a meaning that differs radically from the meaning which it had in Christendom before the rise of modernism.

Representatives of religious liberalism tell us that Christian education of the older type produces "secondhand religion." A recent writer says: "secondhand religion is no religion. It is a wretched makeshift."[1] This is true, if by this term is meant a mere knowledge of the Christian message without the personal acceptance of it. There are, however, liberalistic writers who use the phrase "secondhand religion" in a new sense, as will directly be shown.

Modern theology comes to us with the claim that the Bible is not to be accepted as God's Word. The message of Christianity, we are told, is of a social nature, and necessarily varies and changes with the nature of the particular social improvements that are supposed to be in order. Since Christianity, in the opinion of modernists, has no fixed, definite message of truth or doctrine, a Christian religious teacher should not profess to teach definite religious truth. Any claim of this sort, they tell us, can only produce secondhand religion in those who are taught. The way of orthodoxy, says Dr.

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[1] Hodgkin, *Lay Religion*, p. 41.

Herbert Alden Youtz, of Oberlin Theological Seminary, is "to give the people a secondhand account of God."[2] Modern interpreters of religious education tell us that children should not be left under the impression that there is definite Christian truth in which they may be instructed. Professor George Albert Coe, of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, who is perhaps the most prominent American writer on this subject, argues that we ought not "to impose beliefs [or doctrines] upon children."[3] "The aim of instruction," he says further, "is not to impose truth but to promote growth [namely, growth toward social efficiency]. *The instruction must be emptied of its traditional implications of telling pupils what to believe.* To impose such beliefs upon a child [in other words, to tell a child what to believe] is not to promote the growth of a free personality."[4] This author says further:

> When we have made clear to ourselves what sort of world the Father and we as His children desire [in other words, in what direction to bend our endeavors for social improvement], must not our next concern be that the young also should desire it? What boots it if they know all Scripture, all doctrine, etc., if they have not both the forward look and the sort of desire that can reconstruct a world?—Let the curriculum be drawn from any sort of material.

Similar views have been expressed by other advocates of modern theology. The supposition that the Bible is the source of religious truth, is considered out of date by modernists. Liberalistic writers agree on the point that the source of the divine is world-wide. A recent writer says on this point:

> To find the divine we must trace it out through all its devious course. To hear its message we must listen to the voice of the grass and birds, of the winds and of the stars, and to the still small voice within our own heart. That is poetical, no doubt; but how shall we make out any intelligible

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2 *Democratizing Theology*, p. 12.
3 *A Social Theory of Religious Education*, 1917, p. 65.
4 The same, p. 1. Italics mine.

meaning in all these multitudinous voices and myriad revelations? There is too much discord and contradiction and confusion. There is good and there is evil; there is wisdom and there is folly; there is the permanent and there is the fleeting. Shall we put it all on one level and say: "All is Truth, all is Mind, all is God?" How about the evil? Is that merely an illusion of mortal mind? Surely we cannot trifle with evil like that; it is too deep and tragical to be simply set aside by a wave of the hand. Or if we want to distinguish, what shall be our standard of judgment?[5]

Since, then, according to religious liberalism, the divine is scattered, as it were, throughout the whole world, the curriculum for religious education is to be drawn "from any sort of material." It must not be drawn from the Bible as the one true source of religious enlightenment, nor from books based on the Bible, such as the catechism, for this will give the pupil a fixed or definite idea of religious truth and the result, we are told, will be secondhand religion. A Unitarian preacher says: "The fault is that we have asked people to begin their religious life by accepting certain teachings about God. But this is just a reversal of the natural order. When we make an acquaintance we do not presume to know all about him at the outset. Rather we wait to see to what extent our confidence may be well placed." In other words, the child is to settle these questions without taking either the word of the teacher or the word of Scripture for it. "The influence of the catechism [or of definite religious instruction] in tending to stereotype the idea of God upon the minds of the young," says Henry T. Hodgkin, a liberal Friend (Quaker) "is wholly and utterly bad. In the very subject on which children should be our teachers, we presume to teach them."[6] Do we hear rightly, then, that the children should be the religious teachers of their elders? Our Lord commended

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[5] *The Reformed Church Review,* 1918, p. 244.

[6] *Lay Religion,* London, 1918, p. 196.

certain traits in the character of children, it is true; the point in question however is, Did He appoint the children as the religious teachers? Did He charge the apostles to tell the world to listen to the message of babes, or did He give the apostles a message of salvation to proclaim?

It is somewhat difficult to see wherein the task of the liberalistic religious teacher consists. Not only does liberalism decry the authority of Scripture but the teacher is not supposed to give the pupil the result of his own endeavor to find the divine. In this make-believe religious instruction the pupil himself must by his own effort gather the divine from world-wide sources. Is it possible, one is tempted to ask, that any normal person is taking such views of religious education seriously? The sum and substance of all this learned talk of modern religious educators is, that the children of Christian parents should be permitted to grow up in heathen ignorance and darkness. True, the modern religionists, as a rule, have no objections against instruction in morality, but the same may be said of representatives of non-Christian religious systems.

It may be worth while to notice that among the radical modernists there is at least one who frankly rejected the thought that the young should not be given definite religious instruction. Walter Rauschenbusch says: "If every individual had to work out his idea of God on the basis of his own experiences and intuitions only, it would be a groping quest, and most of us would see only the occasional flitting of a distant light. By the end of our life we might have arrived at the stage of voodooism and necromancy."[7] Another liberalistic writer says: "Neglect of religious instruction, in order not to bias a growing mind, is usually laziness camouflaged as liberalism. What other subject is neglected for a like reason?

[7] *A Theology for the Social Gospel,* p. 168.

— A home without any religion, however liberal, is a dangerous place for a child to be born in."[8]

The modern view of religious education is defended in various books on the subject published in recent years. Prominent and representative among these books is the one by Professor Coe, from which we have quoted in a preceding paragraph. This author identifies religion with social reconstruction and democracy. Hence he defines religious faith as the endeavor to reconstruct society through the means of reforms of various kinds. As already pointed out, religious education is interpreted in social terms; it is identified with social education. Now this is the general position of religious liberalism on the point of religious education. The leading recent writers on this subject are defending this view. The purpose in religious education, says Dr. William Irvin Lawrance, of the Unitarian Church, "is to socialize our pupils." And again this writer says:

> Whatever culture really enlarges the sympathies and multiplies contacts and stimulates to service is to be classed as religious education.[9]—There is urgent need that religious educators break away from conventional usages and recast their curricula along broader lines. What may be taught? Everything that is true either as fact or as illumination.[10]

Religious Education, the organ of the Religious Education Association, says editorially: "We must get away from the concept of religious education as a secluded area of interest for the people who wish to add the facts of religion of the child's curriculum. Religious education is as broad as life itself . . . it is the science of human growth."[11] In other words, all worth while education is religious education. It is supposed that the church, when engaging in religious education, should

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[8] *The Christian Register,* July 8, 1920, p. 19.

[9] *The Social Emphasis in Religious Education,* p. 36.

[10] The same, p. 34.

[11] Vol. XIV, 1919, p. 290.

have for her aim not the dissemination of Biblical truth but the socialization of the pupils.

A writer in a religious journal representing the more advanced type of Modernism, says: "The purpose of religious education is to stimulate the children to form their own conception [on such subjects as the deity, ethics, etc.], based on their experiences, in the belief that these conceptions, standards and ideals will thus have a more vital effect upon the life of the child than any which are thrust upon him" (by positive teaching of Christian doctrine). At a convention of the Religious Education Association held in the summer of 1925, at Wichita, Kans., Ross W. Sanderson, Secretary of the Kansas Federation of Churches, said: "The newer religious education has once for all abandoned the effort to indoctrinate anybody. . . . It has definitely turned its back on the old certitudes." The most advanced Modernist leaders have in fact passed the point where they content themselves with teaching that Christian doctrine is not to be accepted as true. They teach positive antitheism — pure atheism. They do it under the cloak of theological and religious education.

It is important to notice that many of the directors of religious education, who have been engaged by the churches for the instruction of the children and young people, have been trained in institutions standing for the most advanced Modernism. There are many religious educators who make no secret of their antitheistic position. Of this there is convincing evidence.

In the 1928 annual convention of the Religious Educational Association held in Philadelphia, Professor James H. Leuba, of Bryn Mawr College, frankly defended unvarnished atheism in one of the principal addresses of the convention. John M. Versteeg, a Methodist minister in New York, author of a textbook on religious education entitled, *Christianity at Work* (published by a denominational publication house), states,

on the ground of his experiences in this field, that many religious educators "are infected to a considerable degree by extreme behavioristic views, or are, at least, flabbergasted by them."[12]

Professor Walter S. Athearn, of the Boston University School of Religious Education, the author of various books on religious education, in an address given in 1926 before a large religious assembly, made the following important statements:

> An age of science has given us a partial and incomplete view of nature. This partial and incomplete view of nature has been carried into the fields of education, sociology, philosophy, and religion. A materialistic age is the result. Sociology, philosophy, and religion have all been affected by the adoption of the so-called "scientific method," drawn from a partial view of reality. The field of religious education has been invaded. Our greatest task today is to keep religious education religious. The concept of the existence of a personal God is on the defensive. A naturalistic humanism is sweeping, almost unimpeded, through educational and religious circles. There is rapidly developing a cult of Christian atheists—persons who say they accept the ethical program of Christ, but who deny the existence of Christ's God, upon whom that ethical program is based.

Dr. Athearn showed further that a group of men representing a materialistic philosophy "dominates the academic circles of America today." He says, this philosophy

> has revived anew the emphasis of Voltaire, Rosseau, Hume, etc. . . . The pupils of the men of this group are carrying this theory into secular and religious education. Religion is identified with social adjustment. A moral and religious education based on such premises will produce a materialistic, naturalistic humanism and eventually end in atheism, or at best agnosticism for the church and anarchy for the state.

Professor Douglas C. Macintosh, of Yale University, has pointed out in an article in the magazine *Religious Education*[13] that it is distressing to the normal

[12] *The Christian Century*, June 2, 1927.
[13] December, 1930.

Christian consciousness to hear religious education leaders gravely discussing methods of training in what they call "worship," long after they themselves have given up belief in the reality of God. Professor Macintosh concedes that there may be worship without belief in God (as evidenced by the fetish worship of Africa) but raises the pertinent question whether worship of such nature is worth while and can be reasonably offered as a substitute for the worship of God. The article shows that the worship in which American youth is trained by some of the religious educators is not worship of God at all.

The interests of religious education in the modern sense are represented in America principally by the Religious Education Association. There is plenty of evidence to show that this Association is representative of the modern religious education movement, as advocated by the authors quoted in previous paragraphs. And various denominations, as well as the Federal Council of Churches, have officially recognized it and are working with it. The Committee on Education of the International Sunday School Association have published a statement in which — having previously referred to "invaluable agencies" in American secular education — they say: "The field of religious education has such an agency in the Religious Education Association. Such associations should be encouraged as essential to the development of a scientific program for a democratic people."

It may be worth while to observe that the Religious Education Association owes its existence principally to William R. Harper, the first President of the University of Chicago. From its beginning it stood for religious liberalism. "In the Religious Education Association Unitarians have been welcome from the first and have had a voice in its councils and occupied official positions," says a Unitarian writer. In 1913, after the an-

nual meeting of this Association had been held in Cleveland, Minot Simons, the Unitarian minister of that city, wrote:

> I am deeply impressed with the fact that the Religious Education Association is one of the most liberalizing forces of the modern religious world. I have been quite amazed at the theological radicalism which I have heard during the past week.—The R. E. A. deserves our support as Unitarians because it is doing our work to an extent that we little realize.

Of the annual meeting of the same association, for 1919, which was held in Detroit, with Samuel A. Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association, as chairman, a report was published in the eastern Unitarian church paper. "Can we do better," asks the Unitarian writer of this report, "than to give thorough and hearty co-operation to the Religious Education Association which welcomes us without reserve or discrimination, and *which preaches our message* of education in religion with such persuasiveness and power?"[14] Dr. Durant Drake, Professor of Philosophy at Vassar College, recently recommended the R. E. A. as *the most important liberalizing agency of the day*.[15]

The membership of the Religious Education Association is not confined to those who profess the Christian faith. This association, says Charles W. Eliot, one of the prominent American modernist leaders, "acts on the principle: diversity in opinion or belief, unity in conduct or action."[16] It is open to all men and women of whatever religion or denomination who "desire to promote moral and religious ideals in education, and educational ideals in religion." Henry F. Cope, the General Secretary of the Association, says:

> Its membership constitutes a world-group united in a common social life and forming a common fellowship of aim

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[14] *The Christian Register*, April 3, 1919, p. 13.
[15] The same, July 17, 1919.
[16] The same, May 29, 1919.

and service. This aim lifted men and women [not only Christian men and women but also those of other religions] above the [religious] controversies which had hitherto divided them, so that in the Association representatives of the great religious faiths [both Christian and heathen] find themselves standing on a common platform. Its members represent almost every great religious division. They are one in the common faith that life's ultimate product is spiritual and is to be realized [not by supernatural means, or divine grace, but] by those known and orderly processes of development which we call educational."[17]

This is plain language. Educational religion or religious education takes the place of supernatural salvation. This modern world-movement does not stand for anything particular in the way of religion. It is so broad in principle and scope that it cannot take a definite stand in favor of any existing type of religion nor willingly permit any one else to do so. With pride the Religious Education Association points to its universal broadness that embraces even heathen religions. In short, the R. E. A. takes a position of neutrality in matters religious, though it bears a religious name. The devil-worshipers in darkest Africa may not be represented in it, but presumably they would be eligible for membership.

Modern religious education then does not have a religious message or definite religious truth to teach. Just as, from the liberalistic viewpoint, not the content of theology, but the method is the principal thing, so also in religious education the method is supposed to be all in all. Hence Christian believers and representatives of virtual atheism as well as Buddhists and Confucianists are invited to join hands in this work. Schools of religion — "religious community schools" — have been organized in America in which anything unacceptable to non-Christians is carefully avoided. But the fact remains, as Herbert Alden Youtz has aptly said, that "ex-

[17] *The American Journal of Theology*, 1917, p. 386.

cessive emphasis upon practical methods often conceals spiritual deadness. *Here is the fatal weakness of much religious education.*"[18] Yet unless theology has a definite religious message, it is but natural to consider method the principal thing.

The serious pertinent question is, How is it to be explained that men and women who profess evangelical Christianity can make common cause with this modern world-movement and with the Religious Education Association in particular? It cannot be denied that the true character of this organization is clearly recognized by religious liberalists. Is there a possibility that the confessedly evangelical men who consent to labor with this society are not as well informed about its character and aims as are the liberalists? Obviously their support of this movement is entirely inexcusable. Some may say that while they have accepted the invitation to speak in one of their annual meetings, no fault can be found with the contents of their addresses. The point however is, as thinking persons generally are aware, that by your very presence as a speaker you made your influence count in favor of what this society stands for. Is it possible that there are conservatives who fail to see this point?

Dr. Durant Drake, speaking of modern religious education, says: "The great hope of the church lies in education. When education is tenfold as prevalent, there must be either a great revolution in the church or a great withdrawal from it."[19] It can not be doubted that modern religious education, if it be approved of the church in general, would result in a complete liberalistic revolution and the eclipse of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

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[18] *Democratizing Theology*, p. 32. Italics mine.

[19] From an Address, as reported in *The Christian Register*, July 17, 1919.

XVI

THE MODERNIST VIEW OF MISSIONS

RELIGIOUS liberalism has from the beginning been either indifferent or antagonistic to Christian missions. In recent years there has been a change in its attitude to missions. Liberalism, as represented by those who have accepted the modern theology, is now professing friendliness to mission work. This change of attitude is due to a new view regarding the nature and purpose of missions which has come to prevail in liberalistic circles. The modern view of missions stands in strong contrast to the evangelical view.

Professor Edward Caldwell Moore, of Harvard University, in an article on *The Liberal Movement and Missions,* points out that "for the missionary achievements of the nineteenth century the churches described as orthodox have been almost wholly responsible." Liberal churches, he says further, "have sustained missionary endeavor in but slight degree," and "the liberal element within the so-called orthodox churches . . . has frequently excluded itself" from the missionary enterprise. "Hostility to missions, lack of sympathy with the aims, dissent from the methods of those eager in this [missionary] propaganda, *have been almost a party badge of the so-called liberal Christianity.*"[1] The same author, in his book on *The Spread of Christianity in the Modern World,* shows that rationalists and liberalists were "hostile to missions" for the reason that missions stood for the Biblical doctrine of salvation, just as the liberals were also "alienated from the church at home" for the same reason, namely because of the fidelity of

[1] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1913, p. 22. Italics mine.

the church to the Christian faith.[2] This testimony is altogether in accordance with fact.

The real cause for this negative, declining attitude of liberalism to Christian missions is not far to seek. True missionary work is always based on the conviction that you have the truth and the truth must be given to others. "The real belief in absolute truth," says a writer in *The Unpopular Review,* "is a missionary state of mind, and carries with it the faith that truth is the one thing worth having."[3] Modern liberalism denies the possibility of knowing absolute religious truth. Furthermore it considers all questions of religious doctrine and truth as secondary. Therefore it has no positive religious message. The best in Christianity and the best in heathen religions is, according to modern theology, only subjectively, or relatively, good. If Christianity be better than some of the non-Christian religions, we are told, the difference is only in degree, indeed in some instances in but slight degree. The fact is that some of the liberals — the Unitarians, for example — frankly confess to their own substantial unity with certain heathen religions. A Unitarian writer, having called attention to the fact that religious liberalists have more in common with the Reform, or Liberal Jews than with orthodox Christianity, proceeds to say:

> Then we think of other non-Christian religions. Has it not been the Unitarian group that has led in the affirmation that *there are no heathen religions,* that there is one Father over all, and all true thought and feeling, yes, all dim groping after truth and right, is as divine in origin as the word of Hebrew seer or Christian leader?[4]

Indeed, the Unitarians, as will be presently pointed out, glory in their co-operation with pagans, such as the Brahmo Somaj of India, a Hindu society which is an-

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[2] Page 87.

[3] July-September number, 1918, p. 96.

[4] *The Christian Register,* January 15, 1920, p. 60.

tagonistic to evangelical Christianity, but friendly to Unitarianism. The Hindu poet Tagore, by the way, who is well known for his enmity to the Christian faith, represents the viewpoint of the Brahmo Somaj.

Professor Francis A. Christie, of the Unitarian theological seminary at Meadville, Pa., in an article on *Unitarianism,* says:

> What corresponds to the customary foreign mission work [in evangelical denominations] exists [among the Unitarians] in the relations sought by the Unitarian body with [pagan] circles in India and Japan. The typical instance is the friendship and co-operation established with the Brahmo Somaj of India.

Professor Christie adds that students of the said Hindu society who resort to Unitarian theological schools in America "find an essential agreement in faith." "The Unitarians think of the Brahmo Somaj," he says further, "as their own movement expressing itself in terms of Indian tradition."[5] "The bond of union among us all," said another Unitarian professor, referring to Unitarians in America, "is the fight against the deity of Jesus Christ." Obviously and naturally heathen religionists are included in this bond of union.

It is to the Unitarians' credit, however, that they do not claim their entering into relations with Hindu and other heathen bodies, and recognizing them as representing "their own movement" — that they do not claim this to be mission work, though the writer just quoted says, it corresponds to mission work. Some of the liberals within evangelical churches, on the other hand, evidently think it the purpose of missions to enter into "relations" and religious fellowship with non-Christian peoples. Representatives of religious liberalism in evangelical denominations are of the opinion that the missionary should not come to the heathen claiming that Christianity is the one true religion, but he should ap-

[5] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1917, p. 566.

preciate the heathen religions and learn of them, and in turn have the heathen people appreciate Christianity and learn of it.

It is a noteworthy fact that modernism in general admits that it has been influenced by the heathen world. Dr. Miller, the founder of the Christian College of Madras, wrote: "Remember that the Hindu religion has given the world the great truths of the immanence of God and the solidarity of mankind."[6] Henry T. Hodgkin, Secretary of the British Friends' Foreign Mission Association, formerly missionary in China, says:

> It is the missionary's duty to interpret to the West [i. e., to Christendom] all that is highest and purest in the East [i. e., in heathendom], seeking to set forth the true humanity, the simple-hearted faith and love *to be found in all religions* and races, so that those who have sent the missionary forth may be drawn to love and appreciate those to whom he goes. It is the missionary's high calling to interpret West to East and East to West by sympathy and true understanding."[7]

The science of Comparative Religion "has flooded the world with a new light," says Dr. William I. Lawrance. It has shown that "back of religions [both Christian and heathen] is religion, and each [religion of the world] is appreciated and the whole [namely universal religion] is apprehended through sympathy."[8] The great heathen faiths should be studied, says this writer, "not to catalogue their errors but to understand them." Missionary education should teach Christians "to appreciate non-Christian peoples and their religious faith, and to approach them [on the platform of universal religion] in a spirit of helpful comradeship," instead of undertaking to convert them.[9] Professor Gerald Birney Smith, of the University of Chicago, says: "Gradually

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[6] Randall, *Humanity at the Cross Roads*, p. 317.
[7] *The World Tomorrow*, June, 1919, p. 161. Italics mine.
[8] *The Social Emphasis in Religious Education*, p. 97.
[9] *The Christian Register*, May 22, 1919, p. 12.

we have come to see that it is religiously desirable that the Christianizing of non-Christian peoples shall mean *the strengthening and purification of the best religious and moral traits of their native faith, rather than its complete eradication.*"[10] Dr. John Herman Randall writes: "What an opportunity is presented today for religion to realize, at last, its true mission in the world and, minimizing all differences, begin to magnify those things common to all religions."[11] At the World's Sunday School Convention, held in Tokyo, in 1920, Prince Tokugawa in an address said of the convention's message and purpose: "It is not a mere Christian propaganda; it is part of that greater propaganda of the Religion of Humanity, which makes us feel that all the world is akin."

The view, held by the representatives of modern theology, that mission work means the "interpretation" of Christianity to the heathen peoples on the one hand, and the "interpretation" of the heathen religions to Christendom, on the other, raises a number of puzzling questions. It is readily seen that the supposed task of such interpretation could not furnish the essential motive for mission work. This modern way of reciprocal religious interpreting implies that heathenism is met on a common basis and is recognized as one in essence with modernism. Besides, if the liberalistic view of the Christian faith is accepted, namely that Christian doctrine is to be considered as of only secondary importance, to acquaint heathen peoples with it must also be a secondary matter. Neither could religious liberalists consistently expect to find the doctrines of non-Christian religions to be of a more vital character than the doctrines of the Christian faith. It follows that interpreting the West to the East and the East to the West can not be a matter of primary religious import. *And such*

10 *The Biblical World*, November, 1919, p. 638. Italics mine.
11 *Humanity at the Cross Roads*, p. 229.

interpretation cannot reasonably be named mission work. Be it repeated here for emphasis that the Unitarians are showing good sense by their refusal to speak of their own work as mission work when they simply enter into fellowship with representatives of heathen religions recognizing them as co-workers in a common cause.

But the new view of missions includes more than mere mutual interpretation of religion. Its burden is the social gospel. Instead of working for the salvation of individuals by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, it undertakes to save society by socialization and reforms of various description. Dean Shailer Mathews, of the Divinity School, University of Chicago, says on this point:

> We used to regard the foreign missionary as trying to save brands from the burning. Now we can see he is also putting out the conflagration [making endeavor for individual salvation unnecessary]. He is a messenger of good will, an ambassador of the higher internationalism of the kingdom of God.[12]—If Christianity can only rescue brands from the burning but has no power to put out the fire [then we have] a religion doomed to disappear with the advance of ethical liberalism.[13]—The new social interest of Protestant Christianity . . . *wants to save men into heaven by embodying the principles of the kingdom of heaven in the state.* It is less concerned in rescuing people than in educating them to keep them out of danger.[14]

Professor Gerald Birney Smith says:

> Today the missionary enterprise is being shifted from a program of securing a few souls from eternal disaster to the ideal of a long campaign of education and social reconstruction in the non-Christian nations.—Increased emphasis is being laid on the claims of the social and political future of the non-Christian peoples on this earth.[15]—The Great Commission was [formerly] regarded as an autocratic [author-

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[12] *The Biblical World,* March, 1915, p. 129.
[13] The same, December, 1914, p. 374.
[14] *The Constructive Quarterly,* March, 1913, p. 108. Italics mine.
[15] *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology,* p. 110.

itative] command to be obeyed. Today missions are justified and supported by looking forward and seeking to meet the [social] needs of the future.—Humanly determined programs are being substituted for dogmatic decrees in the work of the churches. This is genuine democracy.[16]—*The missionary enterprise is rapidly being conceived as a democratic social program* rather than as the rescue of a few individuals from the divine wrath. To reconstruct the social life of a people in all its phases is the end of the gospel. Education is coming to be a primary means of accomplishing the missionary task.—In a word, when the missionary enterprise is seen to be a democratic religious movement, it gives to Christianity a task of supreme importance.[17]

This author, who, by the way, is the Professor of Systematic Theology — Christian Doctrine — in one of America's largest divinity schools, defends the view that "a democratic religion [such as modernists desire to represent] must exist by human consent rather than by a claim of divine rights [or by building on the authority of God's Word]."[18] In other words, Christianity is humanized and, on the mission fields as well as elsewhere, is identified with social reconstruction — the new democracy. The effort is no longer to save the individual from sin by preaching and teaching the Gospel. It is no longer believed that this is, at the same time, the most effective way to improve society. But the aim is to save society through reforms and legislation of various kinds. Professor George Albert Coe, of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, says on this point:

The modern foreign missionary movement started out as an effort to rescue individuals from sin by preaching. It is now transforming itself into co-operation with the socially constructive forces of the peoples to the end that the level of the whole civilization may be raised. Educative processes that form the social standards are becoming basal in missionary strategy.[19]

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16 *The Biblical World,* July, 1919, p. 423.
17 The same, November, 1919, p. 638. Italics mine.
18 The same, July, 1919, p. 422.
19 *Religious Education,* October, 1916, p. 381.

Another writer in *Religious Education* says: "When one faces the matter squarely, the problem of foreign missions is the same at heart as that which is before the churches at home. We are at the big business of constructing a Christian social order."[20]

A Unitarian reporter at the annual meeting of the Religious Education Association, of 1919, held in Detroit, points out that the new view of missions was defended in this gathering. He says: "It would surprise many of our [Unitarian] household of faith to hear the missionary work in our [evangelical] sister churches interpreted in terms of world friendship, world relationship and world service. Yet that is exactly the point of view taken in the Missionary Education Movement," as set forth by its representatives at this meeting.[21] A writer who was formerly connected with a Christian college in China says:

> The church of today is increasingly emphasizing that part of its message which has to do with transforming this world into the Kingdom of God. Christians are today attacking sin by trying to abolish poverty, ignorance and disease. Pursuant to this conception missionaries are emphasizing in China, education, medical work, famine relief, and help for the unfortunate members of society. In all this they meet with a hearty response, for the Confucian school that has so dominated Chinese thought through the ages directs its energies largely toward making human society ideal.—*The social message of Christianity is strikingly in accord with the best of Chinese tradition.*[22]

All unbiased students will admit that religious liberalism is more nearly akin to Confucianism than to New Testament Christianity.

Another object included in the modern view of missions is stated by Gerald Birney Smith: "One of the supreme tasks of the church [both in the West and

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[20] *Religious Education,* April, 1910, p. 91.

[21] *The Christian Register,* March 27, 1919, p. 10.

[22] *The Biblical World,* June, 1917, p. 335. Italics mine.

East] in a democratic age is to make universally accessible the historical interpretation of the Bible,"[23] i. e. the liberalistic religious views. In other words, the defenders of modernism consider it the church's business to spread modern theology. Nothing is more natural than this. You could not expect a liberalistic church to propagate the evangelical faith, could you? Now the greatest impediment in the way of such liberalistic endeavor is old-fashioned New Testament Christianity. As for heathenism it decidedly has liberalistic tendencies. It is an undeniable fact, as has been intimated, that the most fundamental doctrine of modern religious liberalism — the doctrine of divine immanence — is of heathen origin.

The essential liberalism of the most prominent heathen religions is evident from the religious eclecticism of their adherents. Not only have they, as a rule, a great variety of gods from which to select those whose supposed pretensions appeal to them, but the practice of countless numbers of heathen proves that they have no difficulty to profess various religious faiths, for example, Buddhism and Confucianism, at the same time. Heathen people, as a rule, have no objection against accepting the Christians' God as one among many. What they object to is the exclusiveness of Christianity. Modern liberalism also revolts at the thought that all other gods must be rejected and that there is only one way of salvation. Heathenism is essentially liberalistic though it does not go to all the length of radical modernism which explains away religion by reducing it to a psychological formula.

It may be worth while, in this connection, to inquire into the causes for the difficulties which modernists encounter in persuading those of liberalistic views to identify themselves with a liberal church. Children who

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[23] *The American Journal of Theology*, 1917, p. 347.

have been brought up under liberalistic influences are difficult to win for the liberalistic church of their elders. The Unitarian church membership recruits itself largely, in some sections almost wholly, from the ranks of evangelical churches, that is to say from those who had been won for Christianity through evangelical influences but have made shipwreck of faith. The cause for this interesting fact is incidentally given by Professor Edward Caldwell Moore, as follows: "The true course is apparently to have religion and then to liberalize it. It is seemingly futile to have liberalism and then seek to inject religion into it."[24] In other words: If you desire that young people embrace religion, do not preach to them liberalism, for if they become liberalistic in thought, you will find it difficult to arouse in them a real religious interest and to persuade them to unite with a church. But after they have become religious, you may liberalize them and still hope that they will remain religious and be willing to take upon themselves the duties of membership in a church.

Professor Douglas C. Macintosh, of Yale University, says similarly, liberalism "is much more efficient in conserving the faith of modern-minded men who are already Christian" than in leading non-Christians to regard Christianity as even probably true.[25] This is an acknowledgment of the fact that persons brought up in liberalistic circles are admittedly not easy to win for a liberal church. Though such young people are liberalists, they evidently fail to see sufficient reason for the existence of the liberalistic church. Also, of the small number of students in Unitarian theological seminaries only a minority is of Unitarian parentage. Now since "it is seemingly futile to have liberalism and then seek to inject religion into it," it follows that the matter of liberalizing those who have embraced evangelical

[24] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1912, p. 10.
[25] The same, 1915, p. 306.

Christianity — having become members of evangelical churches — is a question of life and death to liberalistic churches. "It is our mission," said a speaker in a session of the American Unitarian Association, "to instruct, enlighten [i. e., liberalize] and harmonize the churches of Christendom." All this goes far to explain the missionary practice of modern liberalism. Its efforts are spent in the attempt to win evangelical Christians in the homeland as well as in the heathen countries for modernism. The Unitarians furnish a good illustration to the point. While they have established "relations" and fellowship with pagan religionists, they carry on a great work to spread modernism in the homeland.

Nowhere, apparently, has the attempt to liberalize evangelical churches been more successful than in Japan. It has been known for some time that the young Christian church of Japan has to considerable extent fallen prey to the systematic modernizing endeavors made by Unitarians and other liberals. The official representative of the Unitarians in Japan has recently made the assertion that Japanese Christians in "orthodox" mission churches are now as a class thoroughly liberalized.[26] "As early as 1890 the magazine *The Unitarian* was started in Japan, and another, the *Shinri* (Truth) as an organ for propagating the higher criticism. This movement shook the Japanese Church to its foundations. For at the same time a movement took place within the church in the same direction, questioning the inspiration of the Bible and asking for a revision of the Creed. Some doubted various fundamental doctrines. As a result, faith became colder from that time onwards among Japanese church members."[27] In China and India the modern theology is working havoc among converts

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[26] *The Christian Register*, May 2, 1918. Compare the article *Christianity in Japan*, in *Religious Digest*, 1919, No. 4.

[27] *Report of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference*, vol. IV, p. 113.

to Christianity.[28] The missionary Robert Gillies, of the China Inland Mission, reports that in China the destructive criticism is making inroads upon the preaching of the missionaries and upon the literature published by missionary publishing houses. This is the consequence of prospective missionaries attending unsafe colleges and seminaries in the homeland. Furthermore many of the Christian missions in China send their students to Great Britain and America to be educated and in many instances their faith in the Bible, as taught by faithful missionaries, is undermined. A veteran missionary says: "We pray the Lord of the harvest that He will thrust forth laborers into the harvest, and then we send those laborers to seminaries where they are unfitted, wholly incapacitated, to work in the harvest field."[29] It will probably be remembered that Evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman gave the advice that the churches at home should recall from the mission field all missionaries who did not believe without reserve in the integrity and authority of the Bible.

Rev. Charles Inwood, a Bible teacher and evangelist who has visited many mission fields of the world, reports that, in his opinion, the greatest menace to the efficiency of Christian missions is found in the lack of conviction as to the inspiration of the Bible as the authoritative content of the Christian message. "At home this means the shifting of the basis of the missionary motive from obedience to the command of Christ to a purely humanitarian impulse and purpose. On the mission field it means less study of the Bible as the message of final authority as to the needs of man and God's way of salvation, and more study of man and his environment to discover his personal desires and human possibilities."

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[28] *The Sunday School Times*, June 28, 1919.

[29] The same, December 26, 1920, p. 715.

At the quadrennial meetings of the Federal Council of Churches, held in Boston, 1920, Dr. Doremus Scudder, of the Congregational Church, formerly a pastor in Japan, after making a plea for the admission of the Unitarian Church to the Federal Council, complained that the evangelical churches of Japan refused to admit the representative of the Unitarian Church, Dr. Clay MacCauley, to their fellowship. "Among the [evangelical] missionaries in Japan," he said further, "there were young modern-minded and modernly trained missionaries, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, and others, whose point of view concerning Jesus was practically the same as that of this veteran [Dr. MacCauley]."[30]

Under the title, *Can This Be True?* the *Moody Bible Institute Monthly* for November, 1920, has an article giving "opinions expressed at a missionary conference in India recently":

1. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is like the avatars of the Hindus. 2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ and the Virgin birth are not facts. 3. People make a mistake in speaking of the Bible as inspired rather than inspiring. 4. Jesus cannot do all the work of redemption in a lifetime. 5. Isaiah fifty-three is not a prophecy of Christ. The appearance of its being so is largely due to its translation having been made by Christians. 6. We should not refuse to think that Jesus made mistakes in what He said. 7. The idea of a day of judgment is not believed by any sane person.

The *Sunday School Times* says:

Notwithstanding the steady tendency to unbelief in the cardinal doctrines of the Word on the part of many modern missionaries, yet it will be an encouragement to God's people to know that in all these lands the Lord is raising up a native ministry who know, love and preach the clear message of the Gospel.[31]

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30 *The Christian Register*, December 9, 1920, p. 3.

31 October 23, 1920.

Professor William Brenton Greene, Jr., of Princeton Theological Seminary, in a timely article on *The Crises of Christianity,* writes:

> Again, the crisis of Christianity appears in this, that while her missionaries are multiplying, their gospel, it would seem, here and there, little by little, is being depleted and emasculated. Such is the warning that has been coming to us from Japan. Such is the warning that is now coming to us from China. Such is the warning that is beginning to come to us from other fields. Could anything be so appalling? We have been wont to look on our Foreign Missions as the demonstration that the church is obeying her Lord's last and great commission to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." But what if the gospel which *some* missionaries preach is another gospel which is not a gospel? This would prove treason both in the council tent and on the firing line.[32]

To an evangelical believer it is shocking to observe the perversion of the mission movement by the modernists. Missions among non-Christian religionists are conceived by them as "a give-and-take arrangement," as something to be carried out in co-operation with adherents of non-Christian religions. The objective of missions is taken to be "to *confer* rather than *convert,* to *share* rather than *uplift*" (to use an expression of Professor Albert John Murphy, a liberal writer on missions). The thought is that Christians and pagans should meet on an equal basis for mutual encouragement. The idea of conversion of the heathen is rejected, and even the thought of an uplift for them through Christianity has been discarded by the more advanced modernists, as savoring of a patronizing, arrogant attitude.

The missionary movement, then, in so far as liberals have gained control of it, is being converted into a movement of co-operation with adherents of non-Christian religious systems including pagans. The mission cause

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[32] *The Princeton Theological Review,* 1919, p. 346.

is being turned into a movement for reforms of various description, as may be further pointed out directly. The religious faith of those who participate in this co-operative enterprise is either considered secondary, or is not at all taken into consideration. As a matter of fact, matters of religious doctrine are always held to be secondary by liberals. They do not accept the fact of definite divine revelation, and their religion is therefore necessarily of a nontheological, nondoctrinal nature. Liberals have often admitted that they have no positive doctrinal truth to offer; they profess to be engaged in a quest for truth. The same may be said of adherents of various pagan systems; hence pagans can be met by liberals on common ground.

But the quest for religious truth is not the primary objective of the liberal mission movement. The objective is expressed, as already intimated in a program for educational, social, economic, and political advancement. It is held by liberals that those who identify themselves with a movement of this nature are followers of Jesus, or Christians, regardless of their religious views. Liberalism stresses the idea that Christianity is a life, meaning thereby that it is a life expressing practical interest in world betterment through reform.

Professor Albert John Murphy, of Columbia University, in his book, *Education for World-Mindedness,* published by a denominational publication house (the Methodist Book Concern) says:

> Today we think of the missionary process as the co-operative endeavor of idealists of all nations to produce, through the motive of a social religion, an ennobled and friendly human society of varied and mutually contributing cultures.

In an editorial article printed in the Federal Council Bulletin, the organ of the Federal Council of Churches, for November, 1930, the modernist view of missions is defined as follows:

> The distinctively Christian genius of the missionary movement has sometimes been weakened by a patronizing quality which has subtly crept into it. Missions have often been something which Western Christians [the Christian churches of Europe and America] do for others in "benighted" parts of the globe, not something that we do with others. But that older view is swiftly passing. The spirit of the modern missionary at its best is summed up in E. Stanley Jones' remark about his attitude toward the people of India. "I went to them through pity," he says; "I stay through respect." The missionary movement of today may be truly defined as a world-wide fellowship of men and women, drawn from every nation and every race beneath the sun, joining hands to make Christ Lord of all the life of the world.

In passing it may be noticed that E. Stanley Jones, as a young man, went to India an evangelical believer but is today an outspoken modernist.

To the extent that the mission movement has come under modernist influences and leadership, it is committed to the new conception of missions. Many articles in defence of this interpretation of the missionary movement have been published in various church papers. In a circular on mission work, distributed from the headquarters of the Student Volunteer Movement, it is stated that "the International Missionary Council works to reinterpret the missionary message." The Christian Endeavor Topic, designated for May 31, 1931, was "How the Work of the Missionary is Changing." The Student Volunteer Movement is committed to the new view of missions. In the Quadrennial Student Volunteer Convention held in Detroit, in December, 1927, nearly all the appointed speakers defended this view. They conceived of missions as "a reciprocal fellowship with non-Christians in the quest for God." Liberals have lost all certainty about God, and are inviting the pagans of Asia to join them in a quest for God and a movement for world reform. Concerning the above-mentioned Detroit convention the editor of the modernist journal, the *Christian Century,* having

stated that the speakers at this large gathering defended the liberal view of missions, said:

> The problem of missions has become, in the thinking of the speakers at Detroit, the problem of world Christianization. And this new phase contains all the social, economic, and political implications that the most advanced prophets of a comprehensive social gospel have been preaching since the days of Rauschenbusch.

A few decades ago practically all Protestant missions stood for the fundamentals of the Christian faith: the doctrine of a personal God, of the inspiration of Scripture, of Christ's deity, of human depravity, of redemption through the Atonement, etc. Today, when reading of missions or studying mission statistics, one naturally wonders what kind of missions are spoken of. There is all the difference in the world between fundamental and modernist missions; the two not only exclude each other but are inherently antagonistic to each other. The one is, in fact, the reverse of the other. Therefore reports and treatises on missions have value only when it is known what the writer is talking about, that is to say, what kind of missions he has in mind. To class both modernist and fundamental missions under the same head is unreasonable and unjustifiable.

As to the real meaning of the modernist view of missions, and the extent to which Protestant missions have come under the control of modernists, we shall give a concrete example. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (the missionary organization of the Congregational Church, commonly known as the American Board) is one of the oldest and largest of the Protestant mission societies. The annual meeting of this Board for 1930 was held at Madison, Wis., and the report of it published in the *Missionary Messenger,* the official organ of the Board, of December of the same year. The report reveals the fact that the idea of missions as "a give-and-take arrangement"

between Christianity and paganism was unhesitatingly defended. We quote from the report:

> The idea of mutual sharing seems to have been uppermost in the minds of the missionaries. We go out to share, and the pagan peoples there share with us their best, to the general uplift of humanity. — Stephen G. Peabody, who recently returned from China, struck the keynote from the outset when he said that he had found from experience that he had an irrepressible desire to share the best that he had, to be used with the best the Chinese had, to bring about, together with the Chinese, something more beautiful, bigger, better than either of us had yet. For example take ancestor worship; there are elements in this that we can build on, just as the Christian religion was built on the old truths of the Jewish race.

One of the principal addresses at this meeting of the American Board was given by Paul Hutchinson, an editor of the *Christian Century*. Mr. Hutchinson made bold to declare that the doctrines of historical Christianity are untenable suppositions. He stated with regret that a vast majority of missionaries are fundamentalists, and also that the churches established by the missionaries in foreign lands "are overwhelmingly fundamentalist." He asserted that this is an unbearable condition of things, and further expressed the opinion that it is absolutely necessary for the missions which are supported by American Board "to state formally, openly, and without equivocation that they do not accept these teachings," (speaking of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith). It is necessary, Mr. Hutchinson said, that the Board "cause a clear dissociation from the fundamentalist doctrines of the majority of the missionaries and of the churches abroad," viz., the churches which have been established through evangelical missionary effort. Obviously this is a suggestion that the Board withhold support from fundamental missionaries. All this means that a great Protestant Mission Board is being converted into a society

for the propagation of modernism, that is to say for the annihilation of the work which faithful missionaries of the cross have under the blessing of God accomplished.

Mr. Hutchinson, in the address just mentioned, denounced the historic Christian faith as superstition and urged the consolidation of mission boards (under liberal leadership). He failed to suggest a substitute for the message of the old faith, though he offered the vague suggestion that all areas of thought and all life should be Christianized. He failed to submit a definite program of procedure for modernist missions.

The report of this meeting of the American Board, as published in the *Christian Century,* states that Mr. Hutchinson's address "brought forth a variety of answers." Some of the answers were positive protests. "Some missionary zealots have not calmed down yet," so the report states. The majority of those expressing themselves however, evidently took a similar attitude as Professor Arthur E. Holt, of the Chicago Theological Seminary (Congregational) who made the glaringly compromising remark that "in the old time Board meetings there was too much of what might be called a downpouring from above, while here in Madison we had something of an upheaval from below." He added: "A combination of the two is perhaps what we desire." Never before had the American Board in any of the annual meetings countenanced so bald a rejection of the Christian faith. The year 1930 evidently marks a turning point in this respect. As a matter of fact, it had long been known that the leadership of various denominations, which had formerly taken a strictly fundamental attitude, had fallen prey to modernism, but their mission work had been generally supposed to be conducted on rather more conservative lines.

The demand for the consolidation of the mission boards, as expressed by the above-named writer, is noteworthy. E. Stanley Jones has made the statement that

the Christian churches — including, as a matter of fact the mission boards — "must unite or they will perish." He advocates a general union between fundamentalists and modernists. Concerning co-operation with pagan religionists he is evidently of the same opinion as Mr. Gandhi who holds that "all the principal religions of the world are true."

The cause of missions from the modernist viewpoint received a notable impetus through the "Laymen's Inquiry," in 1932; an inquiry made by a committee consisting of fifteen liberalistic men and women who visited missions in various foreign countries. Their report was published in the work *Rethinking Missions.* The slogan, "All faiths are alike in a common struggle" indicates the viewpoint from which this report is written. The committee disbanded in 1934, but in December, 1936, a number of religious liberals met in Chicago and decided to launch a quarterly publication, known as *World Christianity,* through which the cause for which this committee stood is to be further served. "World Christianity" is but a new name for the objective of the modernist mission movement.

In a report of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, held in January, 1936, at Asbury Park, N. J., this conference is described as representing "a co-operative effort of the Protestant Mission Boards of North America." The report states that four of the appointed speakers at this conference defended "the point of view on missions held by the younger generation," meaning, as the context shows, the modernist viewpoint.

The Unitarians have for a considerable period on a diminutive scale carried on work in Japan with the objective of conferring rather than converting. Evidently they realize that in a church or society taking a general nondoctrinal attitude, the idea of converting pagans and other non-Christians does not have a legitimate

place. Enthusiasm for such work is conspicuous by its absence among the Unitarians. It is commendable that they do not follow the strange usage of speaking of such a give-and-take arrangement as mission work.

The religious message of Protestantism, in so far as it has embraced theological liberalism, is a message of negation and denial, the denial of the Christian faith. Liberalism has no positive message except such as relates to reforms and various external improvements which are to be carried out mainly through the civil governments.

Seeing that the movement which is to take the place of the Christian mission movement does not have for its objective the conversion of non-Christians to the Christian faith, one can scarcely help but wonder why such endeavors are persistently spoken of as missions. As intimated above, to accept the new interpretation of missions means that missionary efforts are turned into work of an entirely different nature, in fact of the very reverse meaning. And can any one suppose that conferring with non-Christians is a matter of such importance that liberals will make for it the same sacrifices as have been made by evangelical believers for the purpose of spreading the Gospel? Is it not obvious that liberalism necessarily destroys missionary enthusiasm and the missionary motive? Does not the remarkable retrogression of the Student Volunteer Movement, as well as the falling off in the financial support of missions (which began years before the present financial depression), speak volumes in this respect? Is it not precisely the men and women holding to the old faith who are interested in the missionary movement, and who show their interest by providing the means for it?

XVII

MODERN RELIGIOUS UNIONISM

THE leading principle of modern religious unionism has recently been stated by John R. Mott: "It is more necessary to be active than to be orthodox." In other words, *to work* is the great necessity; whether you work for evangelical Christianity, or religious liberalism, is a secondary matter. The slogan of modern unionism is, "Getting together by working together." Says Dean Shailer Mathews:

> Yet whatever form co-operative denominationalism may take, we are learning daily one lesson of democracy: the way to get together is to work together. It is futile to try to standardize theologies in a democratic world. It is even more futile to try to find some theological minimum [a minimum creed] which will be unobjectionable to everybody [as a basis for a working union].[1]

This is a correct and authoritative statement of the modern principle of religious unionism. It demands working together with those to whom even a theological minimum, or a declaration favoring at least a few of the Christian fundamentals, is objectionable. Now it cannot be questioned for a moment that there are certain kinds of work in which evangelical Christians and representatives of liberalism can unitedly engage. If former President Taft, who is a Unitarian, were your neighbor, could you not consistently agree to co-operate in making a needed sanitary improvement, or undertaking to persuade a property-holder not to rent his building for immoral purposes? Most assuredly so. But, assuming that you are a believer in the deity of Christ and in salvation through the Blood, you could not, without becoming disloyal to the fundamentals of the faith, engage

[1] *The Independent* (New York), April 17, 1920.

in evangelistic or other distinctly Christian work with Unitarians. If you, for example, consented to the engagement of a minister, or evangelist, that is acceptable to liberals, you would plainly show that you are not taking your supposed evangelical faith seriously. Even if the liberalists — desiring you to take a stand in favor of unionism — agreed to leave the choice of a Christian worker to you, would not the fact that you are willing to work with them in such a way create the impression that you do not regard the differences between your position and that of the liberalists as of fundamental importance? Therefore the very fact that you consented to such union endeavors would be an aid to the liberal cause. Liberalism, having no essential doctrines, has nothing to lose but can only gain through the modern unionism.

Back of such unionism lies the supposition that the differences between evangelical Christianity and liberal religion are of small consequence and should be obliterated. A union is to be effected by making conservatives forget and ignore the differences that separate them from modernists. To this end the slogan "Getting together by working together" has been adopted. Here the words of the Prophet Amos are applicable: "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" How can they who accept the Gospel as the apostles preached it, and they who uphold a modern substitute for the Gospel, work together in missionary work? How can the liberals who recognize Buddhists as brethren in the faith and undertake the conversion of believing Christians to modernism, engage in religious work with evangelical Christians? How can believers in Christ recognize as co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord those who speak of the doctrine of salvation through the Blood as "pestilential teaching?" Is it not a surprising evidence of the shallowness of new theology thought that evangelicals are either supposed to virtually aban-

don their position, or that it is assumed the two parties which have opposite views concerning the meaning of salvation can labor together for the salvation of men?

In the month of August, 1918, a Conference of Theological Schools was held in Cambridge, Mass., at the invitation of Harvard University. The last day of the conference was begun with a communion service in which, besides representatives of evangelical churches, Unitarians also participated. The editor of an evangelical church organ, commenting on this "demonstration of Christian unity," says, the nature of the Christian religion, if rightly comprehended, is such that "it does not nullify fellowship," and the Christian faith is never divisive but all-comprehensive. Dr. John Herman Randall writes: "The most hopeful sign today is the new movement toward Christian unity. — Such unity is not the end but only the stepping stone to a still broader religious unity that shall embrace all mankind."[2] This author says further: "What an opportunity is presented today for religion to realize, at last, its true mission in the world and, minimizing all differences, begin to magnify those things common to all religions."[3] Another liberalistic writer says: "The new interpretation of religion demands that men of all religions forget the things that have divided them in the past, and that stress be placed upon the establishment of a genuine social justice." Professor Roy Wood Sellars has the following to say on the question of religious unionism: "The belief in God must not be a creedal element and atheism must cease to be a term of reproach. The question of the existence of God should not affect the fellowship of members in a church. If emphasis is swung to the humanistic side, the question of God's existence will naturally drop into the list of maybe's."[4]

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[2] *Humanity at the Cross Roads,* p. 224.
[3] The same, p. 229.
[4] *The Christian Register,* July 29, 1920, p. 7.

The modern religious liberalism is, it must be conceded, all-comprehensive in design. But modern religion would, clearly, not claim to be all-comprehensive, if it did not deny the existence of Satan and of his kingdom. The new theology disowns the Word of God and denies that the prince of this world "now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). True, if Scripture teaching were false, if there were no kingdom of evil and sin, and the Scriptural teaching on sin were wrong, the liberalistic view on this point might be acceptable. On the other hand, if there is a prince of darkness and a kingdom of evil, it is obvious that an all-comprehensive religion would necessarily include them. That liberalistic religion would be only uniting in its character and effect, and not also separating, is therefore its fatal weakness.

Concerning the "Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America" Professor Geo. Cross says: "Doctrinal discussions are carefully avoided because, no doubt, of the danger of a growth of divisive influences. Nevertheless the doctrinal implications of its position must be squarely faced sooner or later."[5] Dr. Charles S. Macfarland, formerly General Secretary of the Federal Council, wrote: "I am willing to talk with men upon almost any other subject but that of Christian unity. The important thing is to get them together *to show them the common social task.*"[6] Proceeding on this principle, the constituent bodies of the Federal Council have united on a social creed instead of a religious one. We may, of course, be told that social service is the fruit of Christianity. The fact, however, is that the social creed of the Federal Council is not distinctively Christian in character. Any normal man, be he Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, or heathen, will admit that the reforms demanded in the said "creed" are desirable. The social

[5] *The American Journal of Theology,* January, 1919, p. 143.
[6] *Christian Service and the Modern World,* p. 110.

creed of the Federal Council would make a praiseworthy platform for a political party; it is quite inadequate as a creed or working scheme for a federation of churches. Premier Lloyd George, of England, has lately said wise words on this question:

> The task of the churches is greater than that which comes within the compass of any political party. Political parties may provide the lamps, lay the wires, turn the current on to certain machinery, but the churches must be the power stations. If the generating stations are destroyed, whatever the arrangements and plans of the political parties may be, it will not be long before the light is cut off from the homes of the people. The doctrines taught by the churches are the only security against the triumph of human selfishness, and human selfishness unchecked will destroy any plans, however perfect, that politicians may devise.

In other words, the churches, by faithfully propagating Christian truth, are rendering the greatest possible service to the nation. Professor George R. Dodson has well said:

> The social interests are a very important part of life, and religious people today usually try to promote them. But they neither are nor can be the basis of a church. How to make the world a decent place to live in is not one problem but many, and they cannot be solved together. If men had no other interests, they would not form a church but would create special organizations to produce special results, e. g. associations for tax reforms, city planning, better housing, smoke abatement, pure milk, industrial conciliation, suppression of vice, the mastery of tuberculosis and social diseases, etc. Even if the church undertook these tasks, it would fail, and its minister could be nothing more than a superficial sociologist, knowing many things but knowing none of them well, and doing many things but all of them badly.—To give religious names to organizations formed for secular ends conduces neither to clearness of thought nor to any other good.[7]

It is quite possible that a church or a federation of churches may stand for positive religious truth without adopting a written creed; they may have a creed though

[7] *The Christian Register*, October 24, 1918, p. 11.

it be unwritten. Among the constituents of the Federal Council there are those who would not accept a minimum creed expressing adherence to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. It is a significant fact that the Unitarians and other liberals earnestly desire admittance into this organization, on the ground that some of the most radical liberals are even now within this body. A federation standing loyally to the fundamentals would not attract the Unitarians. The fact remains that unless a federation of religious bodies stands for the fundamentals of the Christian faith and will write them on its banners, it does not sustain a distinctly Christian character. That it may have a social or political creed does not change this fact in the least.

It should be added that the social service wave which struck the modern church not many years ago has largely receded. "Social service has been a blessing," says Willard L. Sperry, a representative of liberalism, "but its sources of energy are not as strong as they were; the coal may be getting low. We are liable to develop a cult of busybodies. After all, when those in need are housed and clothed, they still must know what to do with life."[8] And President Arthur Cushman McGiffert has said: "We are plagued in these last days by social service."[9]

In short, modern religious unionism stands for ignoring every fundamental of the Christian faith. This attitude toward Christian doctrine is illustrated by the following expression by Dr. Paul S. Leinbach, an editor of a Protestant denominational organ. In a Unitarian convention he said, referring to a work of charity in which he was engaged with representatives of various denominations, including Unitarians: The men who undertook this work "forgot the little theological tags

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[8] The same, July 28, 1920, p. 8.

[9] The same, August 22, 1918, p. 9. Compare p. 137 of the present book.

which divided them and were united in the spirit of service." The same speaker said "there are in the church too many divisive dogmas which keep apart the friends of truth and high ideals."[10] While it is true that the Unitarians, including those among them who stand for outspoken, bald atheism, claim to labor for high ideals, the fact remains that Christianity and the full-fledged liberalism are, religiously considered, opposites. The modern religious unionism means, in principle, the renunciation of the Christian faith.

On a preceding page Charles Clayton Morrison, the editor of America's leading modernist journal, was quoted as saying that the clash between fundamentalism and modernism is as profound and grim as between Christianity and Confucianism. In an article on the Edinburgh Conference on faith and order in The Christian Century (September 8, 1937) Dr. Morrison advocates a general union of all churches. This illustrates the nature of the popular modern unionism.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon wrote:

> I have taken a deep interest in the struggles of the orthodox brethren; but I have never advised those struggles, nor entertained the slightest hope of their success. My course has been of another kind. As soon as I saw, or thought I saw, that error had become firmly established, I did not deliberate, but quitted the body at once. Since then my one counsel has been, "Come ye out from among them." I have felt that no protest could be equal to that of distinct separation.

[10] *The Christian Register*, June 10, 1920.

XVIII

CHURCH DISCIPLINE VERSUS PERSECUTION

WITHIN recent years a number of books and magazine articles have been published defending the view that the Christian church has not the moral right to exercise discipline for false doctrine. Modern thought in general takes the position that all disciplinary measures on the part of a church, to exclude heresy and maintain the purity of the faith, are an infringement of the principle of religious freedom and liberty of conscience. Discipline on account of false doctrine is held to be persecution, differing only in degree from the dungeon, the rack and the stake. A host of modern writers have asserted that a church that will not bear with modernism in her midst manifests the spirit of persecution that formerly lighted the stake for those who dared to dissent from the creed established by the state.

Not a few liberalistic writers on this subject describe the Christian church as the enemy of religious freedom. Some seem to be of the opinion that there would never have been religious persecution, had not the church been intolerant. It is proper, therefore, to raise the question, how it came about that the church whose head is the pope, girded herself with the sword to overcome the dissenters and to maintain her creed by incarceration and persecution; and whether there is any ground for the opinion that the teachings of the Christian church, as laid down in the Scriptures, would countenance that sort of thing.

In the first place it is to be noticed that the Christian church endured severe oppression and at times cruel

persecution for nearly three hundred years, namely until the time of Emperor Constantine the Great. This emperor embraced the Christian religion and eventually decided to make Christianity the religion of the state. His sons, who succeeded him, began to persecute the dissenters, namely the heathen who desired to adhere to the religion of their fathers; they also persecuted those Christians who protested against state-churchism. For this new departure there was absolutely no Scriptural ground, no more than for the practice of prayer to the holy virgin, or for the doctrine of salvation by works, or for the various other unscriptural doctrines and practices that were gradually introduced in the established church. There was in this period a radical change which amounted, practically, to a partial repudiation of Scripture authority. The leading church became paganized to a large extent. The degenerated state church represented a strange amalgamation of paganism with Christianity. Originally the church, following God's Word alone, had kept itself in consistency with Christian principles; the church of Christ had manifested the nature of a lamb. Now the lamb lost, as it were, its innate characteristics; it developed the teeth and claws of a beast of prey.

But there were, as already intimated, Christian dissenters who endured persecution rather than to identify themselves with the new state church. In certain periods the protesting dissenters were comparatively strong. Then came the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. The leading reformers believed a union of church and state to be unscriptural, but yet they finally consented to it — a glaring inconsistency. Even in New England, Protestant churches were established that were in effect state churches, persecuting those who differed from the established creed. Today Protestantism is practically a unit in the advocacy of religious freedom.

The denial of freedom of conscience is contrary to the principles, precepts, and spirit of New Testament Christianity. The New Testament Scriptures clearly forbid persecution in any form, but expressly demand church discipline for those who err in doctrine or practice. Our Lord has ordained that if a man "hear not the church," he should be excluded (Matt. 18:17). And Paul says: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject" (Tit. 3:10). Again Christ has commanded His followers to "resist not evil" (Matt. 5:39) namely, as the context indicates, not with the sword of iron. In the parable of the tares among the wheat, where the field represents the world — not the church — as is expressly stated (verse 38), the servants are bidden to "let both grow together until the harvest . . . lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them" (Matt. 13:29, 30). This is clearly a warning against the attempt to bring about a regeneration of society or of the world by the use of force; it is a warning against persecution.

Modernism defends the opinion that the principle of religious freedom and of liberty of conscience does not permit of church discipline to be exercised in the case of false teaching. Obviously this view is an indication of the shallowness and superficiality of the modern mind. In effect the modern position means that the dismissal of a liberalistic minister, or a professor in a church institution, is contrary to the principle of liberty of conscience.

The modern view of religious freedom is the very opposite of the view defended by the early champions of freedom. The early defenders of religious liberty held that liberty of conscience means that no one should be compelled to make a profession of faith or to unite with a church. And if a member or minister of a church decided to withdraw, he should have the right to do so. The modern view that the principle of religious free-

dom gives an unorthodox religious teacher the right to fill a position in an orthodox church would have appeared stupid and dishonest to the early defenders of freedom. They were not under the spell of modern thought and hence must have realized that a truly orthodox church is necessarily burdened in conscience to entrust the important office of a preacher or teacher to a religious liberalist. An orthodox church cannot with a good conscience tolerate that sort of thing. Therefore the principle of liberty of conscience must give a religious body the right to ask for the withdrawal of those who do not accept its doctrines and principles, just as it gives the individual the right to withdraw of his own free will.

Modernism, it is worthy of notice, seems to have developed a type of conscience that differs radically from the Christian conscience of the old heroes of the faith. In our day liberalistic theologians who have discarded the Bible faith think, as a rule, that to ask them to resign their office in an orthodox church is to oppress their conscience and to persecute them. When a number of years ago a minister in a prominent denomination offended his church by his new theology views, the opinion was publicly expressed that to ask him to resign his paying position would be a mild form of persecution, since he could probably not earn as much in another profession. On the other hand the mighty men of faith who defended the principle of religious freedom did not find it in their conscience to remain in a church from which they differed in faith; they withdrew, though to do so may have meant for them the most cruel persecution.

It is refreshing to notice that there are a few representatives of modern liberalism who do not accept the opinion that the principle of liberty of conscience gives a liberalistic minister the right to retain his position in

an orthodox church. The minister of the First Unitarian Church in Cambridge, Mass., says:

> I see no reason for complaints [because of the exclusion of liberalists from evangelical churches]. An organization for the promulgation of doctrines in which I do not believe is one to which I do not wish to belong. If the organization should give me to understand that the assent to its creed which it asks of me is only nominal, this confession of unreality would only deepen my determination not to belong to it.[1]

Without doubt this writer recognizes the fact that Unitarians do not for a moment suppose that it would be inconsistent with the principle of religious liberty to ask the resignation of an orthodox minister or professor in the Unitarian Church. If a secret order may consistently expel a member who fails to stand for its principles, why should it be inconsistent for the church to take similar action?

The modern view of religious freedom is, in its final essence, merely camouflaged doctrinal indifference. The liberalistic mind has largely accepted the opinion that there is no absolute religious truth, that doctrine is a secondary matter, and that it should therefore not matter to an evangelical church if a liberalistic person is holding office. The thought, however, that the principle of religious freedom requires such an attitude of indifference cannot be taken seriously, no more than the modern idea that the early Protestant leaders who condemned religious oppression and persecution, did so from motives of indifference to doctrine. This view regarding the early Protestants is in fact an historical untruth that is a reflection on the intelligence of those who accept it. If the reformers had not believed that Christian doctrine is of the greatest importance, might they not have remained in the state church in which they were born and held office? Was it not possible for them

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[1] *The Arbitrator,* January, 1919, p. 12.

in that church to lead a devoted life and even to deviate from the established creed, provided they did not publish or profess their convictions? Would they, or their followers, have suffered persecution and death for the sake of doctrine, if they had the modern views of indifference as to Christian doctrine? Has it ever been heard of that a liberalist, who is neutral or indifferent in the matter of faith and doctrine, endured persecution for his religious faith? Will a man die for his faith when his religion consists principally of negations and when he accepts the opinion that there is no absolute religious truth and that theology is nothing beyond method? It is incredible that religious liberalism will make martyrs.

Modern liberalism boasts of the advocacy of religious freedom. We are told that modernism has never oppressed or persecuted those who are of different persuasion. There is abundant evidence that this claim is not well taken. The countries whose governments have fallen prey to religious liberalism have suffered a curtailment of religious freedom. Soviet Russia affords a striking illustration of this fact. The government of France is so thoroughly modernist as to show anti-religious tendencies. Today a church or religious society has less legal right in France than any secular society or corporation; religious societies have been deprived of the right to own real estate property. Says the late Professor G. Santayana, of Harvard University:

> Liberalism has been supposed to advocate liberty, but what the advanced parties that still call themselves liberal now advocate is control, control over property, trade, wages, hours of work, meat and drink, amusements, and in a truly advanced country like France control over education and religion; and it is only on the subject of marriage (if we ignore eugenics) that liberalism is growing more and more liberal.[2]

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[2] *Winds of Doctrine*, p. 4.

Professor Santayana is right. In France the liberalistic government has to some extent succeeded in gaining control of religion. As liberalism is increasing in other countries it is working toward the same end. More and more voices of theologians in America are heard that favor a union of liberalized religion with the state. This will mean persecution for dissenters, as may be further shown elsewhere.

XIX

HISTORICAL FALSEHOODS — CONTRASTS BETWEEN FREEDOM AND ANARCHY

WHEN George Burman Foster, because of his advocacy of modern liberalism, was excluded from the Chicago Association of Baptist Ministers, he advanced the claim that he was nevertheless "the most truly Baptist of them all."[1] A writer in a Unitarian periodical thinks, the Unitarians, since they do not require any doctrinal tests whatever, are "the real successors of Roger Williams," the founder of the Baptist Church in America. The same writer thinks, the Unitarians "are perhaps the only people who are Baptists in Roger Williams' estimate."[2] The editor of a Unitarian journal is of the opinion that "thorough adherence to the fundamental Baptist position" assures "sympathy with liberal theology."[3] The view has often been expressed that the true Protestant position demands the toleration of religious liberalism in an evangelical church. A Baptist writer says:

> Has the Baptist denomination with its splendid tradition of religious liberty not room for those who exercise their liberty in adopting . . . modern interpretations of the old gospel? Surely it cannot be that the denominational heirs of Roger Williams intend to drive out those who are Roger Williams' spiritual heirs.[4]

In a similar way it is often asserted that the true Congregationalists, the true Lutherans, etc., are the representatives of the new theology. We have singled

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[1] *The Christian Register*, March 6, 1919, p. 7.
[2] The same, May 2, 1918, p. 7.
[3] The same, May 2, 1918.
[4] Quoted in *Word and Way*, 1911, No. 44.

out the Baptists for an example, since liberal tendencies are frequently ascribed to the early Baptists. Similar assertions are made concerning early Protestantism in general. Professor Geo. Cross, of Rochester Theological Seminary, for example, identifying Protestantism with liberalism, says: "Protestantism denies that the natural and the supernatural are separate. It finds the supernatural within the natural and the divine within the human."[5] Auguste Sabatier, the well-known liberal French theological leader, wrote: "With Luther and Calvin the Christian conscience was definitely recognized as autonomous. It can never again retrace its steps nor again take on the yoke. The idea of setting up in Protestantism an external infallible authority [recognizing the Scriptures as God's inerrant Word] is only a survival of the principle which was defeated in the sixteenth century."[6] Similar views regarding Luther and Calvin have often been expressed by liberalistic writers.

But on what ground are such assertions made? Every student of church history ought to know that the leading reformers of the sixteenth century advocated the principle that Scripture, not conscience, is the final authority, and that a conscience that is not tuned to Scripture teaching is an erring conscience. The idea that conscience is autonomous, — a law unto itself — that it is not to be subject to God's Word — this idea would have been a very abomination to the reformers. To ignore this outstanding fact regarding their position and assert the contrary is inexcusable. There is absolutely no evidence for such a view. It is just one among the many perversions of history which liberalism accepts dogmatically on the authority of some liberalistic writers.

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5 *The American Journal of Theology,* April, 1919, p. 140.

6 *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit,* p. 252.

Needless to say, our question is not whether there are in our day churches of the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, etc., denominations which are liberalistic in doctrine. It is only too well known that this is the case. The point in question is, Was there originally in the doctrines and principles of these churches any ground for the claim that they cannot consistently be identified with the old theology to the exclusion of liberalism? Are these churches, in so far as they refuse to countenance the new theology, true Congregational, Lutheran, etc., churches, or have they fallen from their first estate? Is there, historically considered, any ground for the opinion that true evangelical Christians take a liberalistic view of the nature of Christian doctrine and can therefore not have any doctrinal tests or, in other words, that liberalism is an innate characteristic of Protestantism?

Concerning no other evangelical church, probably, has the claim of innate liberalism been so frequently repeated and so largely accepted as about the Baptists. It is for this reason that we take them here for an example. Many writers, both within and without the Baptist Church, have said that Baptists have no binding creed; they do not stand for anything doctrinally; they have a right to reject any doctrine, every Baptist Church is a law unto itself in matters of faith and practice. If this were a correct statement of fact there could be no question but that Baptists are essentially liberalistic in faith.

But there are Baptist churches — great numbers of them — which take the position that to deny the Christian fundamentals is to repudiate the Baptist faith. In other words, there are Baptists who have a creed, be it written or unwritten, that is held to be binding. This fact has been overlooked by those who have asserted that "heresy trials" are made impossible by the supposed Baptist position as to creed. Though there are

liberalistic Baptist churches which do not hold to anything doctrinally, the supposition that they constitute the whole of the Baptist denomination can find acceptance only with them that are unacquainted with the outstanding facts.

A thorough search of early Congregational and Baptist literature, including their confessions, establishes the fact beyond the possibility of a doubt that there is no room whatever for the view that they were liberalistically inclined, or had no doctrinal tests. It is difficult to see that a church could be more free from theological liberalism than were the early evangelical dissenters. The British state church of a few centuries ago would not have admitted that it was theologically liberalistic in any respect. Considered from the viewpoint of these dissenters, however, the union of church and state which, contrary to Scripture, was upheld by the state church, was in effect liberalistic. It meant that the Scriptures are not the only authority in matters religious. The Mennonites, Baptists and other dissenters saw clearly — and every evangelical Christian will agree with them today — that there is absolutely no Scripture warrant for a union of a Christian church with the state. They realized that a church which consents to a union with the state, does not follow the voice of Scripture but of self-interest on the part of kings and potentates and ecclesiastical leaders. The Scriptural way to plant and maintain the faith and to kindle the love of God in the hearts of men is quite different from the way of state-churchism. State-churchism is not founded on Scripture, hence its acceptance means the rejection of the principle of the sole authority of Scripture; and therefore it, in principle, means to that extent theological liberalism. The leading principle of liberalism is the setting aside of Scripture as the authority for the faith and practice of the church and considering doctrinal matters of secondary importance.

The fact that the early Baptists published a number of confessions at various times has been supposed to indicate that they had no binding creed, since former confessions were superseded by newer ones. But a comparison of these confessions shows that they are statements of one and the same creed. Need it be said that neither the Baptists nor any other body of reasonable Christian confessors were ever of the opinion that a written statement which they might give of their faith was beyond the possibility of improvement? The Baptists stood for definite doctrines and principles and those who did not accept their creed were refused the right of membership; in other words, they had an authoritative creed like all other evangelical denominations. One of their articles of faith was the inspiration of the Scriptures. They recognized the Scriptures as infallible, verbally inspired; they said of the Bible that "God is the author thereof (in the sense that He inspired it), therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God," as is stated in the Baptist Confession of 1677. Now the acceptance of the inspiration of Scripture is in itself a creed of tremendous importance. It would be folly to say that a church which accepts the supernatural divine revelation in Scripture has no binding creed or is "a law unto itself" in doctrinal questions. When consistently accepted the doctrine of inspiration excludes theological liberalism.

Again the opinion has often been expressed that Baptists, since they have always advocated liberty of conscience, should within their churches grant all liberty to deviate in doctrinal matters from the accepted standards. Only recently, when a Unitarian minister occupied the pulpit of a Baptist church in a New England city, the local Baptist Ministers' Association, though affirming their own orthodoxy, declared themselves in favor of granting such liberties. Their decision

on this question they expressed in the following statement:

> Resolved that we believe in freedom of thought and religious practices. For centuries Baptists have been passionate advocates of religious democracy in its purest forms. While we cherish our own personal convictions unflinchingly, we concede to those who differ from us the ancient Baptist privilege of private judgment and free speech [even in our churches]. As Baptists we believe in religious freedom.

So they supposed themselves justified to open their pulpits to Unitarian preachers. "To Unitarians this is peculiarly gratifying," says a Unitarian editor, "for our central principle is that same unfaltering faith in the right of private judgment and spiritual freedom."[7]

The reader will notice that the Ministers' Association which gave out this declaration failed to make clear the point, what religious freedom, or liberty of conscience, has to do with the question of admitting Unitarian ministers to evangelical pulpits. A number of questions are here pertinent. In the first place it should be noticed that the said Baptist ministers assert their own orthodoxy. Could it be, then, that they are of the opinion that, by refusing Baptist pulpits to Unitarian ministers, the evangelical Baptists would forego the privileges of religious freedom and liberty of conscience? Could not these privileges be exercised without permitting those who deny the deity of our Lord to speak in evangelical churches? Or could it be that the Unitarian ministers do not enjoy religious freedom unless they are admitted to evangelical pulpits? Since the Constitution of the United States of America guarantees religious freedom to every man, Unitarians and freethinkers not excluded, are the evangelical churches violating the Constitution of our land when they deny them their pulpits? We know, by way of illustration, of a person — not a Unitarian — who claimed the right

[7] *The Christian Register,* May 2, 1918.

to preach in all churches of a certain town; his claim was not based on the principle of religious freedom, however, but on a supposed special call. Could it be that the Unitarian ministers' conscience is so constituted that it cannot exercise its God-given liberty, if they are refused the privilege to occupy evangelical pulpits?

And what about Unitarians permitting orthodox evangelical preachers to occupy any of their pulpits? Will they permit faithful messengers of the old Gospel to preach in their churches? Do they believe that religious freedom demands this sort of thing of them? Certainly not. This is what John Haynes Holmes has to say on this point: "Even those radical churches which have freed themselves of all theological bonds have gone to the other extreme of setting up a structure of denial which is just as exclusive as any of the creeds of Christendom."[8] Dr. Holmes is right. In fact, Unitarians are more positive in their denials than some nominally evangelical churches are in their affirmations. There is plenty of evidence of a deep-seated aversion on the part of Unitarians against orthodox preaching, but they obviously agree with liberalistic Baptists in the opinion that the exercise of religious freedom involves the admission of Unitarians to evangelical pulpits.

The question remains, What has the refusal to admit Unitarian ministers to evangelical pulpits to do with religious freedom and with Roger Williams' position on this point? In what respect is it a violation of this principle? Some of the eminent theologians tell us there is such a violation involved but they have utterly failed to make this point clear. How is it to be explained, we may further ask, that people who boast of being in the habit of doing their own thinking, as liberals often do, accept the opinion that a church which takes a definite

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[8] *Unity,* May 22, 1919, p. 140.

stand doctrinally is violating the principle of religious freedom?

We have, by way of illustration, spoken here more particularly of the Baptists, but all other evangelical churches originally occupied essentially the same ground as the Baptists, on such fundamental doctrines as the trinity of God, the deity of Christ, the Atonement, the inspiration of the Scriptures, etc., and concerning the proper attitude toward those who disown these truths. The early Methodists, for example, considered these doctrines as essential, in other words, they had a binding creed including these points of doctrine. This is evident from various statements made by John Wesley. He wrote, for instance, to a prominent Unitarian:

> Take away the scriptural doctrine of redemption, or justification, and that of the new birth, the beginning of sanctification, or, which amounts to the same thing, explain them as you do, suitably to your doctrine of original sin; and what is Christianity better than heathenism? Wherein (save in rectifying some of your notions) has the religion of St. Paul any pre-eminence over that of Socrates or Epictetus? Either I or you mistake the whole of Christianity from the beginning to the end. Either my scheme or yours is as contrary to the scriptural as the Koran is. Is it mine or yours? Yours has gone through all England, and made numerous converts. I attack it from end to end; let all England judge whether it can be defended or not.[9]

The right of a body of Christian believers to stand for certain doctrinal convictions, and consequently to uphold a doctrinal norm for those who would identify themselves with them cannot be questioned. It is impossible to take seriously the opinion that the principle of religious freedom precludes that sort of thing. As for the early evangelical churches, they would have taken it as an insult had they been accused by their contemporaries of holding the opinions on "religious democracy" with which they are credited by teachers in some of our modern theological seminaries. Again it

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9 Faulkner, *Wesley as Sociologist, Theologian, Churchman*, p. 40.

is true that the leaders in the Reformation of the sixteenth century believed in the right of private judgment and private interpretation in the sense that neither pope, king, nor hangman, neither ecclesiastical nor civil authorities, had the right to enforce their religious decisions upon any believer or body of believers who had obtained more light from Scripture or who for any reason differed from the dominant church. The assertion, however, that the right of private judgment meant, in the opinion of the Reformers, that the ministers or members of their churches had the right to teach that which is clearly at variance with God's Word, or that it meant the right to deny the inspiration and authority of Scripture, this opinion is altogether unfounded. Neither Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, nor the evangelical dissenters, confounded religious freedom with religious anarchy, after the manner of modern liberalism.

Various liberalistic writers have said, it is impossible to determine just what the Bible teaches; they assert that it would require an infallible person to interpret the Bible, therefore no individual or church has the right to say that their interpretation of the Bible is correct. To superficial thinking this may be a valid argument. Is it true, however, that no one can tell what the Bible teaches? Do not Bible students in general agree that the Scriptures teach the fundamental doctrines of the evangelical churches? Do not, as a rule, even liberalists admit this? The denial of the fundamentals on the part of liberalism has its cause in their rejection of the authority of Scripture. The opinion that the Scriptures do not plainly teach the fundamentals must be ascribed to ignorance.

Again, when you speak of fundamentals, it is needful to let people know what you mean; it is necessary to define yourself. Dean J. F. Vichert, of Colgate Theological Seminary, by way of illustration, in his booklet *Concerning Fundamentals,* states that those who, in his

view, take "a reactionary attitude" — the conservatives — are too exacting in their insistence on definitions. He says: "Certain doctrines are [by conservatives] defined and declared fundamental. These are to be the test of a man's fidelity to truth, of his orthodoxy and denominational standing." Clearly, however, a doctrine, to be worthy of the name, must be stated or defined. Dr. Vichert thinks, "this proceeding [the demand for definitions] implies a monopoly of truth on the part of those who propose it." He adds: "One wonders whence the infallibility came which qualifies any group of men for such an undertaking. A moment's reflection makes clear that it is but the claim and practice of the Roman church over again. To be sure, the fagot and the stake are missing," etc. Yet in the same pamphlet this author expresses the opinion that men who deny certain teachings which he considers of fundamental importance should be relieved of positions of trust and leadership which they may hold.

There are liberalistic churches which claim they have no binding or authoritative creed nor any doctrinal test, and yet they, to all appearance, shrink from the unavoidable consequences of such a position. The most conspicuous example, probably, of a church which not only in theory but in real practice follows the principle of "no doctrinal tests," is the Community Church organized by John Haynes Holmes, of New York. Of this church it may be truthfully said that it has no binding creed. It is Dr. Holmes' boast that Jews and Buddhists are members of it. Dr. Holmes and probably the majority of his congregation were formerly Unitarians. A writer in a Unitarian journal regrets their withdrawal from that church and points out that a Unitarian church also has the privilege of receiving into membership those of non-Christian faith. It must be assumed, however, that the members of the Community Church recognize

the leadership of Jesus in a similar sense as the atheistic socialists accept it.

The principle of religious freedom and liberty of conscience means that, as a citizen of the state, every man has a right to believe and teach any morally unobjectionable religious doctrine. You may be fully convinced that your neighbor who may be an unbeliever, is erring religiously, yet the state has no right to take him to account for his error. But this principle does not mean that a man who does not accept the creed for which the church stands, has a right to claim membership in the church. The state has its laws to which the citizens must conform and those who break the laws are temporarily separated by confinement in prisons. The church also has its creed and principles by which it is maintained. The principle that every citizen of a given state should make his own laws, or, in other words, be a law unto himself, and that the state has no right to impose its laws upon the citizens — this is the principle of anarchy. Just so the assertion that the church should have no creed, that she should not stand for anything definite as concerns matters doctrinal and religious — that every member should follow his own autonomous conscience — this is the principle of *religious* anarchy. A people which does not recognize the right of the commonwealth to make binding laws, could not be recognized as a state. Neither is a group of persons who refuse to stand for anything definite religiously and doctrinally, a Christian church.

The minister of a creedless church in one of our eastern cities said in a sermon: "Let us stand fast in the freedom with which Christ has made us free and which the constitution guarantees us and in which the supreme court protects us."

The modern notion that religiously there should be no recognized standard or authority and that a consistent believer in religious freedom "don't obey no or-

ders unless they is his own," is curious indeed. A supposed freedom that is not willing to submit to law is not of divine origin. A supposed free church that has nothing to stand for, besides liberty and such matters as social improvement, is a church in name only. It is quite possible to have an organization of that type. The question, however, is not one of possibility, but of principle. It is not enough that the church be free — freedom may be "not according to knowledge" — it must have a purpose — a creed. The editor of a liberal journal has these significant words to say on the point in question:

> The gist of the matter is that Unitarians make their freedom a principle of dissolution when they say that this freedom principle takes the duty out of church attendance. *With a good many of us liberalism is organized disunion, religious anarchy, a bit of bad thinking applied to religion.*[10]

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[10] *The Christian Register,* February 7, 1918, p. 9.

XX

IMMORTALITY

MODERN science has undertaken to explain the soul as a mere "stream of thought," to use the expression of one of America's eminent philosophers, the late Professor William James, of Harvard University, who defended this view. Human personality in any real sense is denied. If this view were correct man could not be immortal in any true sense. If there be no soul it would be folly to speak of its immortality.

Radical modern liberalists have not ceased to speak of immortality but they have deprived the word of all real meaning. President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, (an eminent representative of the new theology) says: "The only valid immortality is of two kinds, influential and eugenic."[1] "The prolonged and rich life of posterity here," he says further, "is the only real fulfillment of the hope of immortality."[2] Professor Coe, of the Union Theological Seminary, thinks devotion to the cause of social regeneration "may be a factor in a process whereby immortality, in the literal sense of indissoluble fellowship between persons, is being achieved."[3] This is immortality in name only. Modernism, denying all supernaturalism, has no room for personal immortality. Walter Rauschenbusch pointed out that the doctrine of transmigration of souls, or of reincarnation, is held by some of the modern theologians. "This theory," he says further, "seems to offer a fair chance for all, provided each soul is really started in the exact environment which it has earned by its past

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[1] *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology,* vol. I, p. 15.

[2] The same, vol. II, p. 692.

[3] *The Psychology of Religion,* p. 298.

life and in which it can best develop for the future."[4] This is a striking indication of the ascendency of paganism in nominal Christendom.

Modern liberalism has no answer to the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Therefore the representatives of modern religion, in so far as they do not deny immortality outright, assume an attitude of general indifference on the question of the immortality of the soul. President McGiffert has pointed out that theologians of today are losing interest in the subject of immortality and "many Christians, because the life after death lies beyond the range of experimental proof [and they no longer accept the authority of Scripture], have grown indifferent about it."[5] In fact, not a few ministers of the modern gospel have preached from the pulpit that there may be no hereafter. "Men are exhorted to find immortality in advancing the race, only remembered by what they had done," declared *The Continent* not long ago. Professor Henry C. Vedder, of Crozer Theological Seminary, says:

> Most theologians and preachers declare very positively that there is a place called Heaven, where the "saved" will forever be happy in the presence of God. There may be such a place; nobody can prove that there is not. But neither can the preachers prove that there is such a place. There is no adequate ground for their confident assertions. When they tell us that there is a Heaven, and all about its conditions and life, as if they had actually been there and had brought back plans drawn to scale and complete specifications, they are just "pushing wind." They know no more about it than you or I know, and that is just nothing at all.[6]

Considered from the viewpoint of modernism which denies the authority of the Scriptures, Professor Vedder is right. Unless God has answered these questions for us in His Word, we must confess to ignorance concerning these things. With faith in the Bible as God's super-

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4 *A Theology for the Social Gospel,* p. 231.
5 *The American Journal of Theology,* 1916, p. 325.
6 Quoted in *The Baptist Believer,* April, 1920, from Chester News.

natural revelation goes, as a rule, belief in heaven and immortality.

The sarcastic references to the other world, which one often hears from modernists, are the natural consequence of their attitude on immortality. Many modernists have spoken contemptuously of the evangelical view as "otherworldly." Following is a quotation from *The Christian Endeavor Guide* as found in *The Watchword*.[7] The quotation occurs in an article on the Christian Endeavor topic for May 31: "How is the Work of the Missionary Changing?"

> The motive for Christian missions has changed as a new concept of the purpose of Christianity in the world has come to Christian leaders. From the days of the early church, when the followers of Jesus were beset with trials and persecutions, to the dawn of the present century Christianity was "otherworldly." The early Christians suffered from their trials and sacrifices, and life to them in the world became somewhat of a burden. They looked to the future life for the fulfillment of their dreams and desires. Courage to endure came to them through faith in a better world in the future. Consequently the goal of Christian missions was to save souls.

But was it not precisely the Scriptural "otherworldliness" of the early Christians which made them "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world," the most useful members of human society? Was it not their living faith in Christ and their conviction of the reality of the future life which caused them to adorn their profession by their consecration to the service of God and man? One recalls that while modernists hold that "otherworldliness" is an obstacle to a useful life on earth, the communists assert that faith in God has a similar undesirable effect.

Dr. J. H. Jowett in a sermon said on the point under consideration:

> It has become almost a habit, and a very cheap one, to disparage any reference to the life to come. Such references

[7] May 17, 1931.

are regarded as weak, otherworldly, effeminate, unpractical. To me the effeminacy is all on the other side. To shut out tomorrow and to refuse to take it into one's thoughts and plans, is about as wise as it would be if a man should build boats up the river and pay no thought to the great ocean beyond, where on the morrow his boats must founder or ride triumphantly. The wise builder of sea boats studies the larger waters for which the boats are intended.

Various defenders of modernism have expressed the opinion that the desire for a future life is essentially selfish. A writer in *The Christian Register* speaks of this desire as "aggravated selfishness."[8] In the view of these writers the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is incompatible with accepted principles of morality. But if the desire for a life beyond the grave be unjustifiable, would not the life that now is fall under like censure? If nonexistence be the unselfish thing and there be no hereafter, would not self-destruction become a virtuous deed? It may be worth while to notice, in passing, that the desire for personal salvation has also been interpreted as selfishness.[9]

The contrast between believing that man's existence is confined to the short span of time of his earthly life, and that it extends through an eternity either of bliss or of woe is apparent. Belief in the immortality of the soul is a tremendous factor in shaping a man's life on earth. It matters much to society, said Professor Goldwin Smith, "whether death ends all and conscience is a delusion," for "the churches are a momentous part of our social organization, and on these beliefs they rest."[10] Human responsibility to God and belief in divine justice cannot mean much if death ends human existence and there is no judgment to follow. Christianity has been criticized severely by modernists on account of its otherworldliness. But otherworldliness is the con-

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8 *The Christian Register*, October 3, 1918, p. 13.
9 The same, May 29, 1919, p. 13.
10 *The Independent* (New York), May 18, 1905.

sistent result of the belief in immortality. Such belief must, as already said, have a marked influence on the lives of thinking people. In fact, true religion is necessarily linked with the conviction of immortality. "The *work* of man may center itself in the present world, but unless the *faith* of man extends beyond humanism, beyond social betterment and art, it is no religious faith at all."

XXI

SCIENCE

IT HAS been said that all science rests on hypotheses or unproved suppositions, therefore theology also might content itself with "workable hypotheses" as its underlying principles. While it is true that much that popularly goes for science is nothing more than supposition, this can by no means be said of all science. Modern science, indeed, works largely with hypotheses and theories. It need not be said that this is in itself entirely unobjectionable. A scientist has the undoubted right to set up a hypothesis. If he succeeds in proving and establishing it, this particular view ceases to be a hypothesis. It is only when scientists teach mere hypotheses as if they were established truth, or when they work with hypotheses that are contrary to Scripture that we must object. The weak point in modern science is that certain unproved theories are treated as and given the appearance of established truths.

It should be added that science in so far as it has to do with practical things, such as medicine, the use of electricity, etc., is established on facts, not on mere hypotheses. While it is true that a theory may help a physician in his effort to find effective remedies, the value of a given remedy depends solely on the fact that it brings the desired results. The properties and effects of drugs are known to physicians.

If a medical "science" which consisted of hypotheses, instead of being based on fact and tested by experience, would be worthless, what about a theology which deals only with hypotheses and does not claim to have truth or fact, but admittedly offers only relative, subjective, imaginary truth? Christianity is an historical religion. It depends for its right to exist on certain his-

torical facts, such as the incarnation of Christ and His work for the salvation of mankind. Deny these truths and you have lost your foundation for the Christian faith.

The statement that there is no conflict between science and religion has various meanings depending upon the personal position of the one who may use such an expression. A Christian believer stating that there is no conflict between science and religion means to say that the claims of modern science, in so far as they are antagonistic to Scripture, are unfounded. A modernist using the same expression generally means the very contrary, namely that religion is acceptable only in so far as it is based on natural law and is explainable by science.

Now the principal facts on which the Christian religion is founded are of miraculous nature. The incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ and other miracles cannot be explained by natural law or science; neither can the divine work of grace in the human heart be so explained. It is due to the direct working of the Holy Spirit. These things are consequently disowned by the more advanced modernists. They hold a monistic view of the world and insist that there is no such thing as the working of God above and beyond natural law. They declare that all truth is uniform with the same laws of nature and therefore the supernatural is unreal.

Now modern science, by taking an attitude of negation with reference to the supernatural, oversteps the bounds of its own realm. The fact is that nature itself and natural law is a proof of the possibility of the miracle. Nothing less than the supernatural, miraculous work of God can account for the existence of nature. Evolution does not offer a real explanation. Most evolutionists admit that they cannot explain how life originated upon earth. The origin of life calls for a work that is superior to natural law — a miracle. Again they who assert that man is nothing more than a highly de-

veloped animal make an assertion which is not only incapable of evidence but is clearly contrary to fact.

A miracle cannot be explained by natural law or by science, yet science is unscientific when it asserts that a miracle is impossible to God. There is no scientific evidence whatever against the omnipotence of God, or the deity of Christ, or any other doctrine of the Christian faith. On the contrary, as already stated, nature itself is a witness for God, and there is in Christian experience abundant proof of the possibility of the supernatural and miraculous. The Christian believer who makes faithful use of his privileges, lives in the atmosphere of the supernatural. So far from believing that the supernatural is impossible, he is convinced that God's Word is true.

Though between the natural and the supernatural, or miraculous, there is a vital difference, it is needful to keep in mind that God may use natural law to accomplish a particular purpose. The supernatural, on the other hand, is done above and beyond natural law. To say with modernism that the supernatural is impossible is to deny the omnipotence of God.

The most objectionable hypothesis of modern science is the theory of naturalism. This, as already intimated, is the assumption that there is nothing beyond nature and material or natural forces. There is, according to this theory, neither divine revelation nor miracle. There is no God beyond or above immanent natural law. Needless to say, this theory is radically antagonistic to the Christian faith. Naturalism is in a large measure responsible for the fact that the higher institutions of science have become hotbeds of infidelity.

Moncure D. Conway, in his autobiography, points to the failure of modern science, after having weakened the faith in supernaturalism, to furnish a sufficient ethical guide. He quotes his friend Goldwin Smith as foreseeing "fatal results to the next generation unless sci-

ence can construct something to take the place of the failing religious conscience." Is not the hope that science will do anything of this sort futile? Unless men are willing to accept the supernatural revelation of God in Scripture, they will never have an adequate foundation for ethics and religion. To take science, instead of divine revelation, for such a basis is to build on a foundation of sand. Naturalism in morality and in religion is fatal to both. None other than President Arthur Cushman McGiffert has pointed out that science, if taken as a basis for morality, is an utter failure. He says: "Science does not make for democracy but for aristocracy and autocracy." After elucidating this point further this author says:

> The ideal of democracy could hardly have arisen in a scientific age.—Science gives us not the ideal of democracy but of the superman, the ideal of autocracy and imperialism. —If we want a democracy it is because we are idealists, or because we are religious men, not mere scientists, and if democracy is to prevail, it will be because idealism triumphs over brute fact and religion forces science to do its bidding.[1]

Science does not furnish any evidence in favor of naturalism. On the other hand, it would be out of the question to suppose that science, without the aid of revelation, could give us adequate information concerning God, His character and man's relationship to Him. It is a popular fallacy that men of science know more about these things than those who have not studied science. It is inexcusable for men of science to undertake the settlement of questions that are beyond their realm, as did, for example, the unbeliever Laplace, when he said, he had searched the heavens with the most powerful instruments and had failed to find God. It is readily seen that this statement, instead of proving the nonexistence of God, is only evidence of the well-known fact that learned men sometimes lack wisdom.

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[1] *Religious Education*, June, 1919, p. 156 ff.

Modern naturalistic science should not assume that it can speak authoritatively on the greatest questions, as if it had the means and ways to investigate the great spiritual verities that lie beyond the physical and material. To accept the dogma of naturalism is therefore thoroughly unscientific. Naturalistic science has made a dogma of a hypothesis for which there is absolutely no proof, and with unheard-of haughtiness it assumes that those who refuse to accept the new dogma are behind the times and have no right to their belief.

No orthodox theologian was ever so dogmatic as the materialistic scientist who alleges that his scientific learning does not permit him to accept the Christian fundamentals; he means in fact that the fundamentals of the Christian faith will not fit his own dogma and unfounded hypotheses. Here, then, namely in the field of modern science as taught in many of our institutions of higher education, is dogma forsooth, dogma not based on revelation, as is the Christian dogma; it has no real foundation. Its foundation is the notions and predilections of unbelieving men. Naturalistic dogma is not worthy of acceptance by those who do their own thinking.

In effect, then, we have mainly two dogmatisms facing each other. On the one hand there is the dogma of Christianity which is based on Scripture and confirmed by Christian experience. On the other hand is the dogmatism of what a recent writer calls naive, uncritical naturalism which assumes that it has the last word on the questions of God and human destiny and that the mechanical interpretation of the universe is the sole and absolute truth, overlooking entirely the outstanding fact that the naturalistic theory has no foundation except in the materialistic, anti-Christian spirit of the age.

And yet science, notwithstanding all its materialistic attainments, recognizes today that there are many far inferior questions to which it has no answer. It does not

know, e. g., what electricity or gravitation is. "We have a remarkable chemistry of commerce and have rescued a thousand waste products," says Professor J. A. W. Haas. "We have created an apparently new physical chemistry which rests on mathematical exactitude. But have we pried any more deeply into the secrets of atoms, or electrons, or ions, or corpuscles? Can we answer the ultimate question of chemical research?" A writer in the British magazine *The Hibbert Journal* thinks, the time will come "when the average man has learned, as well as the philosopher knows now, that all our science and positive information has not brought us one whit nearer intrinsic acquaintance with the fundamental conditions of existence."[2] Herbert Spencer, the well-known agnostic, in one of his later books, wrote: "Could we penetrate the mysteries of existence, there would remain still greater mysteries." President William L. Bryan, of Indiana University, says: "You have the scholar's secret that the learning of the university is not perfect, is never perfect, is always changing in small or great."[3]

Behaviorism is the new psychology taught by radical modernists. It conceives of every thought, feeling and action as mechanical, that is to say the result of physical causes. Human volition and responsibility are denied. Behaviorism flatly denies the existence of the soul. The Behaviorists regard man wholly and solely as an animal, and on the basis of evolution, they deny to man all qualities and faculties which the animal does not possess. All belief in immortality is destroyed. God is bowed out of existence. He is simply ignored. Here, then, is atheism, pure and simple. All forms of repression of the natural impulses are discountenanced. Behaviorism means, as some one has said, that "there is nothing in people's minds, and they think only with their muscles."

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[2] Vol. XII, p. 754.
[3] *The Biblical World*, December, 1914, p. 390.

Such is the new psychology as defended, not only by many scientists, but by an increasing number of modernistic theologians as well. The editor of America's most widely read modernist journal says, speaking of Behaviorism:

> There are scarcely a dozen American colleges of standing in which this new type of psychology has not been accepted, even though it has yet to win a conspicuous convert among the psychologists of the rest of the world.

In other words, there are but few American colleges beside those standing for fundamentalism, in which Behaviorism is not taught. And yet there are critics who would censure the Fundamentalists for declining to take an attitude of indifference to the fact that the most destructive hypotheses are being taught under the name of science to our young people.

XXII

EVOLUTIONISM

THE Scriptures teach that the world is the result of the creative work of God. God is the Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the world. This is denied by modern naturalism. The prevalent type of naturalism is Evolutionism. The theory of Evolution offers another explanation for the existence of the material universe. Evolutionism holds that the earth with all that exists thereon is the result of the natural process of development. According to the hypothesis of Evolution the forces necessary for such development are immanent in matter, in the organisms and in their environment. "The doctrine of Evolution may be defined," says Professor E. D. Cope, "as the teaching which holds that creation has been and is accomplished by the agency of the energies which are intrinsic in the evolving matter, and without the interference of agencies which are external to it."[1] Huxley once said: "The doctrine of Evolution is directly antagonistic to that of creation. Evolution, if consistently accepted, makes it impossible to believe in the Bible."[2]

Evolutionism, it should be noted, has no answer to the question how mere natural forces could have chanced to produce order as we see it in the universe. We are asked to believe the unbelievable miracle that mere forces which are inherent in matter created accidentally that which could only have been called into existence by an intelligence of the highest order.

It has been supposed that the evolutionary theory could be made acceptable to Christian believers by mak-

[1] Quoted, *The Reformed Church Review*, 1914, p. 522.
[2] Professor A. S. Zerbe, in *The Reformed Church Messenger*, April 24, 1919.

ing Evolution simply the method of divine creation. Various writers have so modified Evolution that it has become quite another thing from the hypothesis that passes by that name and with which the modern world is so familiar. It is true that God could have made use of Evolution as the method of creation, but the Bible teaches distinctly that man was not evolved from animal species, that he is not the result of development but of special creation.

The advocates of a modified theory of Evolution have supposed that there need be no fear that Evolution may eliminate God from the world, so long as He, besides the natural forces, may be believed to be back of the supposed development. The fact, however, is only too evident that, in consequence of the acceptance of Evolutionism, God is less and less recognized in the modern intellectual world. Obviously Evolutionism has atheistic tendencies. It has been rightfully said that "the theories of Evolution reduce existing things to so small beginnings that the creation of them seems scarcely worthy of the supreme Being."[3] "The modernist's thought of the world process as a mode of spiritual Evolution makes no call for a God," says Dr. Charles F. Dole.[4] Professor Herbert Alden Youtz, who accepts the doctrine of Evolution, points out that it has in many instances, even on the field of theology, led to mechanism, materialism and atheism.[5] Today the world of science scarcely takes God into the account, except in the sense that they speak of the forces of nature as God. Leading Evolutionists make the attempt to show that natural forces are sufficient to account for the existence of the universe as it is today.

Professor A. S. Zerbe, of Central Theological Sem-

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3 *The American Journal of Theology*, 1915, p. 556.
4 *The Christian Register*, February 20, 1919, p. 174.
5 *Democratizing Theology*, p. 14.

inary, Dayton, Ohio, describes the religious aspect of Evolution as follows:

> According to the view of evolutionary science man traces his ancestry directly to some high order of animal, as the ape or chimpanzee, but ultimately and originally to a very low order of life, as the *amoeba*. The method by which scientists reach this conclusion is somewhat circuitous, but it may be stated briefly as follows: Science starts with the pantheistic postulate that the universe had no beginning in time but has always existed, its existence being due, not to a Supreme Being, or God, but to *some resident force or energy*. — To support this claim all sorts of theories, hypotheses, conjectures and make-shifts are advanced. — Naturally under this view the old Bible doctrine of the existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator of the universe and of man, must be given up, together with practically everything that is distinctive of the Bible and the Christian religion.[6]

William Jennings Bryan says:

> The theory that links man in generations with the ape has paralyzed religious thought and the usefulness of so many of the intellectuals of the world during the last half century. That man bears the image of God and not the likeness of the animals below him, is the foundation stone upon which one must build. The theory advanced by Darwin puts God so far away that man loses the consciousness of His presence in daily life.

Though Evolution is an unproved supposition it has become an integral part of "the modern mind." Hence theologians, in so far as they are willing to take their orders from the crowd, have undertaken to adjust their theology to this popular hypothesis. The representatives of the new theology tell us that the church will fail unless she accepts Evolutionism. The adjustment of theology to the theory of Evolution has resulted in theological naturalism. Modernist theology is not rooted in Scripture but in naturalistic theories. Just as secular modern science considers the universe, as it exists today, the result of Evolution, so modern theology believes the

[6] *The Reformed Church Messenger*, April 24, 1919.

Christian religion, as well as all other religions, to be also the product of a natural evolutionary process. The divine revelation in Scripture is denied; it is claimed that in the Scriptures men have simply revealed their own thought about God. We are told that there has never been a direct divine intervention in the history of the world. God did not intervene for revelation, nor for the redemption of man, nor ever in answer to prayer. In fact, since God is supposed to be merely an immanent force or energy, there is no God who could intervene in the course of nature. God is, from this point of view, the creature of man's imagination. George Burman Foster, e. g. speaks of "man's God-making capacity."[7] "In short, a secular rather than an ecclesiastical explanation of the origin of Christianity is coming to be a commonplace in theological literature," wrote Gerald Birney Smith in 1913.[8]

The new theology teaches, as we have seen, that there never has been particular divine revelation to man, neither through Scripture nor any other agency. Hence what is generally called theology is nothing but supposition and speculation — human thought on these questions; and human thought is always in a process of change. It would follow that there is no final or absolute truth, or, in plain English, there is no religious truth. All supposed religious truth is relative and subjective; it cannot be looked upon as real truth. This is freely taught by new theology writers. "The consequence of this evolutionary point of view," writes Dr. Gerald Birney Smith, "is *the elimination of that quest for finalities and absolutes which is characteristic of the older theological method.*"[9] William Adams Brown, former President of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, after pointing out that the liberalism which he defends

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[7] *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence,* p. 57.
[8] *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology,* p. 95.
[9] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1915, p. 139. Italics mine.

has disowned "the outworn standard" of an infallible Bible, and of the authority of Jesus, says: "When one has once deserted the shores of absolutism and launched one's bark upon the sea of relativity, *there is no harbor, however small, in which one may hope to find a refuge.*"[10]

It may be recalled that Albrecht Ritschl taught the subjectivity of all religious and moral knowledge whatsoever; he believed there are no religious or moral finalities, or absolutes, and that the value of religious doctrines depends on their usefulness, not on their truth. His teaching on "value judgments" shifts the question of the truth of a doctrine to that of its value or usefulness. The new theology teaches that religious ideas are to be used rather than believed and whether a doctrine is true or not is a secondary matter. Indeed these religious or theological ideas themselves are believed, by their very exponents, to be of secondary, nonvital importance, though it is supposed that they may serve a useful purpose. It is indeed a remarkable fact that there are those who accept that which is not even supposed to be true. But again there are those who find it impossible to accept such propositions. They continue to hold fast to the old-fashioned principle that truth is of more value than other values, and hence mere value judgments that are not founded on truth are not worthy of serious consideration.

Evolution, according to the Unitarian Confession, means the continuous "progress of mankind onward and upward forever." It means that mankind is traveling gradually and steadily up an inclined plane to the City of God, as someone has said; Christianity is regarded a gentle stimulant to this splendid cosmic climb. In fact the stimulating effect of Christianity in this process is, in modernist opinion, apparent rather than real, for

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[10] The same, 1912, p. 34. Italics mine.

"the splendid cosmic climb" would take place also without Christianity. Both religion and morality are held to be only parts of the evolutionary process itself. Man is considered merely a part of nature, and it follows "that he, like nature, is under the reign of law." This conception leaves no room for human freedom.

Professor Herbert Alden Youtz, a representative of the new theology, says: "The virtual [modernistic] fatalism of much so-called Christian philosophy [as taught in some of our colleges and theological seminaries] strikes at the very beating heart of all spiritual conviction, and unmans, emasculates, and stultifies our creative efforts."[11] "Naturalism denies our freedom and responsibility and makes our consciousness that we are free but a beneficent illusion," says Professor Alfred E. Garvie.[12] Needless to repeat, religious naturalism is in essence paganism. Dr. Luther A. Weigle, Dean of Yale Divinity School, in 1931 wrote a pamphlet entitled, *The New Paganism and the Coming Revival.* He shows that in a former century virtual paganism, under such leaders as Hume and Tom Paine, was finally overcome and was followed by a religious revival. He points out the fact of the existence of paganism in America today. As representatives of the new paganism he mentions a number of prominent leaders of thought that are outside the church, making no profession of Christianity. He expresses the view that "history will repeat itself," and the present-day paganism will likewise make room for a revival of religion, but the revival, Dr. Weigle tells us, "will not come through the reiteration of time-worn dogmas." Obviously there is a pertinent fact which this writer has overlooked. The paganism of the times of Hume and Tom Paine was outside the church, while the present-

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11 *Democratizing Theology,* p. 15.

12 *Platner, The Religious History of New England,* p. 129.

day paganism in nominal Christendom is both without and within the church. And not only does paganism exist within the church today, but it is strongly entrenched in it. As pointed out elsewhere the more advanced type of religious liberalism within the church is essentially paganism.

In conclusion it may be worthy of notice that religious liberalists as a rule close their eyes to the fact that the modern theology does not fit into the evolutionary scheme. They tell us that the apostles erroneously preached a supernatural religion. Hence all Christendom from the apostles' time to the rise of modern liberalism was wrong in its interpretation of Christianity. According to religious liberalism the long period of about eighteen hundred years was not at all an age of religious evolution, and only recently has Christianity been brought back by the modernists to its first estate, as Jesus taught it. This is an illustration of inconsistent liberalistic thinking.

XXIII

WHAT AILS OUR COLLEGES AND SEMINARIES?

THE opinion that "the only salvation for the church, as well as for the state, lies in education," has been advanced by not a few recent writers. On the other hand there are those who see clearly that knowledge, or education, in itself is religiously and morally neutral. It may be acquired and not used, and again it may be used for good or for ill, depending on the character of the one who has acquired it. Dr. Nathaniel Butler, Dean of the School of Pedagogy in the University of Chicago, has well said in *The Christian Student*:

> We live no longer in the expectation that the millennium will come through education. We once thought that if we were in condition to found good schools and to bring the boys and girls under the influence of a good education, we could finally put a stop to all unrighteousness and sin. But the fact of it is that education with reference to that point is a total failure. Men do no act according to their knowledge, but they do the things they love to do. It matters not how high we may educate the understanding, the man can, in spite of it, remain a slave to his passions. Mankind do not act according to their best knowledge and wisdom, but do the things they love to do. — While education of the intellect may cause its possessor to beware of the grosser sins, it, at the same time, may be only a means of making the man more cunning.

We shall presently quote a number of writers who are of the opinion that higher education, or the acquisition of it, has undesirable irreligious tendencies. Not for a moment must it be supposed, however, that a highly educated person is made acquainted with facts which are irreconcilable with the teachings of the Christian faith, or that knowledge in itself is possessed of undesirable tendencies. Such a supposition would be entirely

erroneous. It is true that in many institutions of higher learning certain unproved theories are taught (such as the hypothesis of Evolution) which are contrary to Scripture teaching, and this accounts for much in the way of irreligious influences. Another weighty reason why our colleges and universities are turning out unbelievers is because the professors, in many instances, make it a point to persuade the students that "the faith of their childhood" must be discarded.

The question is here in order, What is this "faith of our childhood" which, we are told, must be abandoned? Clearly it is the old Bible faith: that Christ, the Only-begotten of the Father, came into this world from another realm to redeem and save mankind, that He died on the cross as our substitute and rose from the dead, etc. It is the faith that believes that God hears and answers prayer. In short it is the faith that accepts the Bible as true — the faith which is taught in our homes, Sunday schools, and churches. Children, of course, will not grasp the real import of these truths like those of more mature age; there is a difference in the degree in which the facts and truths of the faith are comprehended and appreciated; but unless children receive erroneous teaching, the faith of childhood, as concerns its content and truths, is the same as that of maturer age.

With some praiseworthy exceptions our denominational colleges (speaking now of the Northland) stand for a liberalized faith and the abandonment of the faith of childhood by the student, while in state institutions even liberalized religion is often decried and antagonized. Nor do the colleges, as a rule, deny that such is their attitude on the point in question. Professor Walter Scott Athearn, of Boston University, the author of various books on religious education, writes: "Our colleges are engaged in the work of shattering religious conceptions and either ignoring the consequences or holding joint sessions with Christian associations to de-

vise ways and means of unloading their victims onto voluntary classes of religion whose amateurs will attempt to rebuild what professionalism has destroyed."[1] Dr. William Bancroft Hill, Professor in Vassar College, says:

> The great religious problem in every college is the same — to prevent the student from putting away religion when, in the process of development, he puts away childish things [referring to the faith of his childhood]. The faith that he brought to college is the faith of his childhood — simple, unchallenged, and suited to the life of the home. In college he finds himself in a new world of thought where his most cherished convictions seem inadequate or erroneous, and he must either enlarge and deepen his faith or else abandon it.[2]

The religious task of our liberalized colleges is, accordingly, supposed to be of a twofold nature. There is abundant evidence to show that Professor Athearn is right in his opinion that the colleges are engaged in the work of shattering the religious conceptions of the students — the faith of our homes and churches. In this self-appointed task they are in a majority of cases apparently successful. On the other hand, their endeavor to persuade the students of the excellency of religious liberalism, and to save them for the church after they have accepted the modern religious views, is found more difficult. Indeed, liberalistic professors complain that students in the colleges make shipwreck of faith, namely of liberalistic faith, as well as of the old Bible faith. If the liberalized students are persuaded to remain within the church, they seem to be of the opinion that the church has no mission that is really worth their while.

"There is a common complaint that college experience . . . not only does not increase the loyalty of young people to the church but actually cools their ardor," says Dr. George Albert Coe, of the Union Theo-

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1 *The Church School*, p. 256.

2 *The Biblical World*, August, 1915, p. 111.

logical Seminary, New York.[3] Professor Gerald Birney Smith, of the University of Chicago, writes:

> There is a widespread feeling among devout evangelical Christians that modern scholarship is somewhat dangerous to religious faith. Many a boy or girl today is warned by parent and by pastor against the "skeptical" influences of a college course. — That religious shipwreck [i. e., the discarding of liberal as well as Biblical religion] has been the fate of a significant number of college graduates is a fact which cannot be denied.[4]

William Jennings Bryan says:

> Higher education brings with it dangers against which the student should be warned. — Some instructors even speak lightly of religion, and, by clothing infidelity in the attractive garb of science and philosophy, lead their pupils into agnosticism — a tragedy which is the more distressing when we remember that college men not only have a prominence far out of proportion to their numbers but exert an influence upon a still larger circle whose members look up to them for example.

A noteworthy book, published not long ago by Professor James H. Leuba, of Bryn Mawr College,[5] gives reliable information about the religious status and influences of the Christian colleges of America, showing in what degree some of the most fundamental truths of the Christian faith have been discarded. Dr. Leuba has undertaken the task of ascertaining to what extent American scholars, scientists and college students believe in the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. The facts which he presents for consideration were gleaned from a very careful questionnaire investigation. Space forbids to describe here the thoroughgoing, impartial method by which he obtained the data on which his conclusions are based.

The results of this investigation give a great deal of material for sober thought. The data collected by Pro-

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[3] *A Social Theory of Religious Education*, p. 274.
[4] *The Biblical World*, 1913, p. 9.
[5] *The Belief in God and Immortality.*

fessor Leuba would indicate that only 14 per cent of psychologists, 18 per cent of biologists, 19 per cent of sociologists, 32 per cent of historians and 34 per cent of physicists believe in the existence of God. The number of those who accept the immortality of the soul is somewhat larger. One of the most notable results of the investigation is the fact that among college students the percentage of believers is far larger in the lower than in the higher classes, showing that the influence of the colleges is in a measure responsible for the prevailing unbelief. From 40 to 50 per cent of the young men leaving college do not accept the belief in a God who answers prayer.

It will bear emphasis that these figures represent stubborn facts. "The careful reader will not be disposed to deny the great — we might almost say the alarming — significance of these statistics," says a reviewer of the book in question.[6] "We have looked in vain these two years," writes Professor A. S. Zerbe, of the Central Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, "for a denial of the correctness of Leuba's figures, but unless the denial escaped our notice, we must conclude that he records facts."[7] A reviewer in *The American Journal of Theology* says: "The author has put in his debt all those who have the welfare of religion at heart by showing them that *the situation is really much more serious than most of them had supposed.*"[8] Professor William Brenton Greene, Jr., of Princeton Theological Seminary, concludes a noteworthy article on this book as follows:

> In his latest book Professor Leuba exhibits with awful clearness the kind of teaching that prevails in our so-called Christian colleges and also the wide and blighting and terrible influence of that teaching. These are subjects on which the churches have long needed, if they have not always wanted

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[6] Professor Benjamin W. Bacon, in *The Christian Register,* May 9, 1918.
[7] *The Reformed Church Messenger,* April 24, 1919.
[8] Vol. XXI, October, 1917, p. 633.

light. Now that they have it, what is their duty? Their life depends on their answer.[9]

Dr. Leuba sums up the results of his inquiry:

> The situation revealed by the present statistical studies demands a revision of public opinion regarding the prevalence of the two cardinal beliefs of official Christianity; and shows the futility of the efforts of those who would meet the present religious crisis by devising a more efficient organization and co-operation of the churches, or more attractive social features, or even a more complete consecration of the church membership to its task. The essential problem facing organized Christianity is constituted by the widespread rejection of its two fundamental dogmas.

Shocking as are the revelations given in Dr. Leuba's book concerning the religious position of many of our college professors, a more serious matter is the fact that men questioning the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are found even among the leaders of theological thought in the seminaries. A striking testimony to the point is found in an editorial review of Dr. Leuba's work, published in a liberalistic magazine. It is pointed out by the writer of this review that, if Professor Leuba had sent his questionnaire to leading theologians, "he might have been surprised at the answers," for "he might have found some of them less concerned about the dogmas of the church than he seems to be, and as wide-awake to the real problems facing the church and modern society as are the scientists, historians, sociologists, and psychologists."[10]

Is it possible, it may be asked, that there are Christian theologians who question the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, and who are less concerned about the most cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith than is Professor Leuba, who is an avowed unbeliever? Yes, this is the case, as will be shown elsewhere. Wherein, then, we must further ask, do such theologians differ

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[9] *The Princeton Theological Review*, 1917, p. 346.
[10] *The Biblical World*, May, 1918, p. 307.

from the freethinkers? What is the difference between their position and that of outspoken unbelievers? Let us see.

The freethinkers, in a statement of their principles, published in their most widely read organ, *The Truth Seeker,* give their position as to various points of doctrine. Concerning the existence of God they are silent. They do not officially deny His existence; at least, the denial of God is not found in the list of doctrines which they disown.[11] The silence of the freethinkers on this point shows that they leave the question open. The same is true of their view of immortality. They say expressly: "As to the immortality of the soul, we neither affirm nor deny; we wait for evidence." Clearly they are undecided on this question, as well as on that of the existence of God. This is but a way of saying that they do not accept these doctrines. It is apparent, then, that the freethinkers' position concerning these fundamental doctrines is the same as that of the scientists, historians, sociologists, etc., who have given a negative answer to Dr. Leuba's questions.

Now this is also the attitude of the theologians to whom the reviewer in the said magazine article refers, intimating that they would have given negative answers to the questions concerning God and immortality. These theologians are representatives of the modern religious liberalism, the new theology. They stand for nondoctrinal, undogmatic, noncreedal religion; that is to say, for precisely the same sort of religion as is professed by the freethinkers according to their own official statement. The liberalistic theologians, like the freethinkers, give their attention foremost (sometimes exclusively) to what they speak of as important practical questions, meaning problems of moral reform and material im-

[11] This may be ascribed to the fact that certain modern philosophers and liberal theologians give definitions of God which are not unacceptable even to radical unbelievers—atheists.

provement of various description. They overlook the fact that such doctrines as that of God and immortality are of incomparably greater practical importance than questions of improvement and reform.

The reason why the representatives of the modern liberalistic theology take an attitude of comparative indifference toward the most important questions is because they reject the source of our knowledge of these things. They deny the inspiration and authority of Scripture. Therefore they must confess ignorance as to the points of teaching for which the Scriptures are our only source of knowledge. They are agnostics on these points. (An agnostic is, literally, one who does not know.) So it has come to pass that Paul Elmer More can truthfully say concerning our liberalized seminaries: "A divinity school is a place where they investigate poverty and spread agnosticism." In fact, the new theology men in the seminaries often pride themselves on their doctrinal agnosticism. They do not claim to have positive truth regarding the Christian fundamentals. Therefore they do not teach affirmatively on these points. The student is supposed to draw his own conclusions, not however from Scripture evidence but on other grounds. If the student's opinion should chance to differ from that of the professor (assuming that the professor has an opinion on the point in question), it matters nothing, since both teacher and student are working with mere suppositions concerning which they profess to know nothing reliable. The most essential doctrines are reduced and reconstructed into nonessential secondary suppositions. These professors desire to develop in the students a tendency, as William Herbert Hobbs rightly says, "to see both sides of every question and actually to be proud of never reaching a definite decision as to which side was wrong and which right." All doctrine, including the question of the existence of God, is treated as a secondary matter.

But we must not fail to note that though the representatives of the new theology ascribe little importance to doctrine, they with one accord reject the old Biblical doctrines. They are, after all, quite positive in their negative teaching. When they say that questions of doctrine and creed are unimportant matters, their thought is not that it matters little whether the student take the conservative or liberalistic point of view. On the contrary, they believe it to be an important matter that he disowns orthodoxy and accepts Evolutionism and other unproven theories which are in harmony with the spirit of the age. But so long as the student disclaims the old Bible faith he is, as a rule, welcome to his opinion. In other words, there is only one dogma which the representatives of the more advanced religious liberalism accept, namely the doctrine of religious agnosticism: that there is no positive religious truth. If they believed that they had not only negative but also positive truth, they could not take an attitude of comparative indifference as to doctrinal points in general.

We have the testimony of liberalistic professors to the effect that taking a course in a modern college has a tendency to dissuade young men from entering the ministry. For an example, Gerald Birney Smith says: "Many of the most enterprising and devoted men in our colleges deliberately turn away from the Christian ministry because they are convinced, rightly or wrongly, that there is no place in the church for the kind of free and independent thinking which they have learned [at college] to love and to employ constructively."[12] It will be recalled, however, that there is a liberalistic wing of the church in which there is every opportunity for free thought and for unscriptural teaching. May it not be that the young men abandon the thought of the ministry because they believe the liberalistic ministry is not worth their while? Such is, without question, the case when

12 *The American Journal of Theology*, 1917, p. 349.

theological students in the modernized seminaries, after they have been won for the new theology, decide that there are more important things to do than to preach it. "The scientific study of theology in a [liberalized] divinity school has occasionally impelled students to abandon the ministry," said Professor George Burman Foster, of the University of Chicago.[13] Many, in fact, who after their ordination have accepted liberalistic views, were honest enough to leave the ministry, finding that they have no vital religious message. Professor John Alfred Faulkner, of Drew Theological Seminary, wrote: "I have heard of a theological school where the students leave the classrooms in tears because their faith has been shattered or insulted or grieved by what their professors have said."[14] Dr. Augustus Hopkins Strong says of the student in the liberalistic seminary:

> He has all his early conceptions of Scripture and of Christian doctrine weakened, has no longer any positive message to deliver, loses the ardor of his love for Christ, and at his graduation leaves the seminary, not to become preacher or pastor, as he had once hoped, but to sow his doubts broadcast, as teacher in some college, as editor of some religious journal, as secretary of some Young Men's Christian Association, or as agent of some mutual life insurance company.

Nor is a man under such circumstances to be blamed for abandoning the ministry. The blame rests on the seminary which robbed him of his faith, and on the church which tolerates such conditions and supports such an institution. If the ministry of the Gospel is the greatest, the noblest calling—as it, considered from the Christian viewpoint, truly is—what about an institution which, yielded to the spirit of the age, deprives a minister of his vital Christian message? Is not such an institution engaged in a most miserable business? We are told, of course, that a man may accept the new theology and yet be a Christian minister; the fact is apparent,

[13] *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 743.
[14] *On the Value of Church History,* p. 46.

however, that the liberalistic ministry is not an enviable calling. It will be recalled that, while the great majority of Unitarian ministers are men who formerly held pastorates in evangelical churches and have made shipwreck of faith, only forty per cent of former evangelical preachers who enter the Unitarian ministry remain in this ministry. Sixty per cent leave it to follow some other pursuit.

Does not a Christian minister who accepts the new theology find himself in a dilemma? Modern religious liberalism has no answer to the questions that lie at the foundation of the Christian religion. The new theology does not know what to do with sin. It has no message of salvation for the despairing sinner. It does not have a God who really answers prayer. It stands for agnosticism regarding the future life. Unless the modernized minister has an elastic conscience and has learned the art of dissimulation, he has, at the open grave, only words of mock comfort such as Robert G. Ingersoll had at the grave of his father. God pity the preacher who is supposed to have a vital religious message of eternal truth, but has in fact only nonessential, secondary, unfounded human suppositions to present, while leaving his people under the impression that he has something similar to the Christian message. Is it any wonder that "many of the most enterprising and devoted men turn away from the Christian ministry" when they accept the new theology?

The question is here pertinent: Could there be a more disgusting variety of moral jugglery and intellectual counterfeiting than the modern liberalistic denial of God which comes under misleading theological and philosophical phrases? Many of our leading seminaries and colleges are guilty of this gravest offence. Professor George R. Dodson says rightfully:

> When the liberalistic professors [in the theological seminaries] speak of God, you as honest men naturally suppose

they mean something objectively real, a being of infinite wisdom and goodness, the conscious ground of the moral order, whereas they may really refer to their own ideas only. If you questioned them narrowly, you would in some cases find them holding a pragmatist view of God as *nothing more than a successful and satisfactory working scheme.*

If this is serious for you, for the young minister it is tragic. Some men may be content to go on using great words which for them do not imply objective realities, but the most clear-sighted and noble will be unhappy in thus attempting to lead a double life, to pretend and speak as if they believed in what is to them only an idea or postulate or working scheme. They will perceive in time that their steed is only a stick-horse and that they carry what they make believe carries them. They will . . . realize that no good purpose can be served by *disguising a practical atheism under theistic phrases.*[15]

It is said that, since we owe so much in various lines to our institutions of higher education, severe criticism of them is out of place. Is it not true that they have rendered great service to the church and to society in general, and should we not be sincerely grateful for it? Most certainly. Science, for example, is doing wonders in our day. But in so far as science "works," that is to say to the extent that it has been tested by practical application and use, it is *not* established on the hypothesis of Evolution nor on any other unscriptural theory, but is in harmony with Scripture teaching. As concerns its real value and usefulness, modern science would therefore be the same if all scientists were believers in the Scriptures as God's inspired Word.

It goes without saying that no one will criticize the colleges and universities in so far as they are rendering service to the human family. However, the fact cannot be ignored that many of these institutions stand for religious liberalism and unbelief, and in so far as this is the case they do not render service but disservice to society.

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[15] *The Christian Register,* October 2, 1919, p. 151. Italics mine.

The offence consists in this that, besides the dissemination of real learning, they bring destructive religious influences to bear upon the student.

There are those who tell us that our fears are ungrounded. We must have faith, they say, in truth's power to make its own way and to vanquish error. Our apprehension regarding young people in agnostic institutions, we are told, has its roots in distrust of truth. Such statements give expression to one of the curiously perverted ideas of modern liberalism. But what of the professors in some of our institutions of higher learning who not only make light of the doctrines of the Christian *faith* but of Christian *morals* as well? Are we expected to accept the supposition that wrong ethical teaching and perverse moral influences are harmless because of the power of truth to vanquish error? Why educate at all along those lines, if such be the case? The late Dr. William R. Harper, a noted liberalist, once said, "If I were a boy again, I would read every book I could reach." He overlooked the fact that a flood of immoral, let alone irreligious, literature is on the market in our day which is unfit to be read and which has poisoned the minds of a host of young people. Does not the United States government forbid the transmission of immoral books through the mails? Is Anthony Comstock to be praised or censured for his crusade against morally pernicious literature?

If the danger to our young people from morally questionable literature is real, is there not even greater danger for them to sit at the feet of those who profess agnosticism in regard to Christian morals? And is there not every reason to believe that irreligious teachings and influences are every bit as harmful as those of morally objectionable nature? Are not the former indeed more insidiously dangerous and often more radically destructive than the latter? Yet the fact remains that truth will be victorious in the end. Truth will always be truth

whether you and I recognize it as such or not. But while it is true that "truth crushed to earth will rise again," there is grave danger that it will not rise for those who crush it. Irreparable personal loss necessarily results from the rejection of vital truth.

It is for this reason that truth must be defended and error opposed. Efforts must be put forth to get men to accept the truth. Nothing in human life is comparable in importance with the acceptance of religious truth. And in the realm of religion and ethics it is easier to yield to error than to that which is true. Even Goethe who was not a Christian believer said, men follow error for the reason that to do so is easier than to embrace truth. To take the course of least resistance and yield to the anti-Christian spirit of the age is easier than to be loyal to Jesus Christ and fight the good fight of faith. It requires more earnest and determined effort to follow the truth than to yield to error. For a young person who for any length is sitting at the feet of a teacher defending moral or religious error it is the natural thing to become tainted; indeed, speaking generally, it is inevitable.

There are instances in which young people and parents have concluded, since courses in the Bible are offered in some of the colleges, that these institutions must be safe. All depends however on the personal position of the teacher. Bible study under a teacher who stands for liberalism is almost invariably even more objectionable than the study of other subjects under such a teacher. Not seldom it is the case that modernistic Bible study is of so predominantly critical character that the religious side, even from a liberal viewpoint, is lost sight of. "Critical courses in the Bible might be anything but religious," says Professor Athearn.[16]

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[16] *The Church School*, p. 257.

If a Christian student cannot consistently attend a college that is spreading religious liberalism, what about the schools of agnosticism which go by the name theological seminaries and divinity schools? Are they not even mightier agencies of evil than the liberalistic colleges? To those who recognize the vast differences, the fundamental contrasts between the modern liberalism and the old Bible faith — to such it is perfectly clear that the modernized theological seminary is in very deed a great menace, a most formidable foe to the Christian faith and to the moral fiber of the nation. The spread of agnosticism as to the Christian faith and morals by the theological seminaries spells disaster to Christianity.

"What is the effect of the new theology methods upon our theological seminaries?" asks Dr. Augustus Hopkins Strong. He answers:

> The effect is to deprive the Gospel message of all definiteness and to make professors and students disseminators of doubts. — The theological seminaries of almost all our denominations are becoming so infected with this grievous error, that they are not so much organs of Christ as they are organs of Antichrist.[17]

And, as already intimated, the opinion that un-Biblical, irreligious tendencies are the necessary sequence of higher education is not for a moment to be countenanced. Martin Luther spoke of the leading universities of his time as the gates of hell — they were the most formidable powers arrayed against the Gospel. But not for a moment did Luther entertain the thought that the antagonistic attitude of the universities was due to their superior learning. He often refers to the antievangelical professors as "the sophists of the schools." By setting himself as a steel wall against the universities he by no means disfavored education. Furthermore, though the "sophists" of Luther's time claimed to speak in the

[17] *Tour of the Missions. Observations and Conclusions,* p. 189.

name of scholarship and science, they, as a rule, changed their position if the university with which they were connected chanced to be located in a state whose ruler decided to accept the Lutheran reformation. Obviously they took their orders from "the powers that be," while they claimed to speak in the name of scholarship. In our age there are many who advance a similar claim while in fact they take their orders from the spirit of the time.

It is pleasant to notice that there is at least one writer who, though he has accepted liberalistic views, has retained something of his former opinion of Bible study. Clarence J. Harris writes in *The Christian Register*[18] about Dr. James M. Gray, Dean of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago: "Whatever may be the theological narrowness of such a man, one thing is certain, the several courses of Bible study under Dr. Gray did more for the writer as a minister than all the theology meted out in two seminaries." What a pity that the writer of these words stands no longer for the old truth. Presumably he yielded to liberalism under seminary influences, yet, in the same article he deplores the coldness and lack of power in the Unitarian Church.

[18] *The Christian Register*, April 11, 1918.

XXIV

COMMUNISM

AN editorial article in a denominational weekly with the caption, "For Thinkers About Communism," contains this sentence:

> The point is that a man hardly deserves the stigma "Red," merely because he thinks the economic system tried by the first church at Jerusalem would work better and last longer in the First Church of Philadelphia or of Chicago.

This sentence implies that a new economic system was tried by the church at Jerusalem, a view which has been expressed by various writers but which is clearly contrary to fact. The community life of the first church in Jerusalem did not imply a new economic system at all. The arrangement in vogue in Jerusalem concerned only church members; indeed, it was not compulsory even for members of the church. It was of an entirely voluntary nature, a communism of love, based on the principle, "What is mine, is thine" while modern Communism is founded on the claim, "What is thine, is mine." Obviously no church or group of churches could introduce a new economic system; the civil government alone could undertake such a thing. In contradistinction to modern Communism there was in Jerusalem not the slightest thought of any new national economic order, no thought of a system involving the common ownership of natural resources and of the means of production. Clearly a government attempting to establish national Communism, or a church favoring such a system, would deserve the stigma of "Red."

One might suppose that modern Communism, undertaking to introduce a new social and economic system, would naturally confine its efforts to the sociopolitical realm. It is needless to say that this is by no

means the case. The Communist party, which is in control in Russia at the present time and is making notable headway in various other countries, does not represent a mere political party. It is in principle radically antireligious. In fact, as may directly be indicated, its most vital characteristic is its antagonism against religion.

The antireligious attitude of modern Communism has been generally ascribed to the supposed corruption of the former Russian state church. The outstanding fact has been persistently overlooked that the most prominent and authoritative writer on Communism, Carl Marx, (1818—1883) died a number of decades before the rise of modern Communism in Russia. Carl Marx is recognized by modern Communists as their greatest apostle. He was born and educated in Germany and lived for a long period in England. His antagonism toward religion was not by any means due to the condition of the Russian Church. Modern Communists, in their militantly antireligious attitude, simply follow the principles and teachings of Carl Marx. He intended and planned Communism to be what it is today—the greatest menace to religion, the most determined and most deadly foe of Christianity. "Red" Communism, then existed in concept and theory for more than a generation before any attempt was made to carry it into practice.

The modern Communists believe with Carl Marx that atheism is absolutely essential to the success of their system. In fact, as we shall directly see, they take a more uncompromising attitude regarding atheism than as concerns their economic program. In consequence, where Communists are in control they have undertaken the total eradication of religion and in particular of Christianity. Not since the days of the Roman emperor Diocletian, who has the name of being the instigator of the greatest persecution of Christianity in history, have there been so formidable and per-

sistent efforts made to root out Christianity. The Socialist writer Sherwood Eddy, who has visited Russia repeatedly to study conditions and who is in various respects sympathetic with Communism as he found it, wrote:

> The same spirit that was manifest under the persecutions of Nero or Diocletian is reappearing in Russia today. Certainly the Church never had to meet in the persecution of the Roman Empire what it has to face in this relentless, implacable, ruthless persecution.

And Professor Matthew Spinka, of the Chicago Theological Seminary, in his book, *Christianity Confronts Communism,* points out that "since the Diocletian persecution, there has never been such a concerted, determined, and ruthless attempt made to sweep all religion off from the face of the earth, as at present."[1] The most authoritative and reliable work on religious conditions in Europe, entitled *Church and State on the European Continent,* by Dr. Adolph Keller, a Protestant clergyman in Geneva, Switzerland, has a chapter headed, "The Destruction of the Church in Russia," and another on "The Martyr Church in Russia."

The appalling story of this persecution is too lengthy to be told here. According to latest reports (December, 1936) only eighty-three Lutheran pastors are left in Russia of about 230 before the beginning of the Communist persecution. Forty-seven of the eighty-three are in slavery in Siberia or are forced to dig canals in the White Sea Country; of the remaining thirty-six the whereabouts of only fourteen are known. The Mennonite Church of Russia, which a decade ago numbered about 80,000 souls, has ceased to exist as an organization.

Following is one of the countless expressions of the hatred of the Communists against Christianity. Lu-

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1 Page 119.

natscharskij, Commissar of Education of the Soviet Republics, wrote:

We hate Christians. Even the best of them must be regarded as our worst enemies. They preach love to one's neighbor and pity, which is contrary to our principles. Christian love is a hindrance to the development of the revolution. Down with love for one's neighbor. What we want is hatred. We must know how to hate, for only at this price can we conquer the universe. We have done with kings of the earth; let us now deal with the kings of the skies. All religions are poison. They intoxicate and deaden the mind, the will, and the conscience. A fight to the death must be declared upon religion. Our task is to destroy all kinds of religion, all kinds of morality.

Early in 1937 Stalin, the present head of the Russian dictatorship, issued the following manifesto concerning the fight of Communism against religion:

We regard religion as one of the greatest enemies of Communism and Sovietism. The fight will be carried on further and with great energy. We want no compromise with the religious world; for the religious aims and our aims are fundamentally hostile to each other. For the moment we will change our fighting tactics against the church. During the past twenty years (nearly) we have used every sort of force in our fight against religion. That period is at an end. The new period will witness a spiritual fight against religion. This fight will call for even greater efforts than violence. Above all we shall need a large number of highly trained and cultured propagandists. When this second period shall be closed, then a third and last period will be entered upon, in which religion in the Soviet Union will exist only as a historical memory. This, in short, is the goal set for our party, for the godless, for the Young Communists, and for the Soviet Government.

The aim and objective of Communism is to raise the proletariat of the world (the wage-earning class) to the position of ruling class. To reach this goal the Communist program calls for a violent revolution in all countries. Communists ignore the fact that it is not of their own choosing that they themselves are not of the better situated class. It is seen then that this conflict

is not based on any moral principle. On the contrary, it is founded on class hatred, and is therefore essentially immoral in principle. All moral responsibility is denied by the Communists. The denial of moral responsibility makes the profession of atheism imperative.

In the platform of the Communist Party in the United States for the campaign of 1936, atheism is not mentioned. The explanation of this omission is found in the following statement made by their presidential candidate, Earl Browder, in his book, *What Is Communism?* He says: "We Communists have learned to be much more careful in approaching people, we take pains not to offend any religious belief," and he adds the remark that the cessation of rude attacks upon religion "is a positive improvement in our work."[2] He points out further the necessity of guarding against "the mistake of closing the minds of religious people to Communist influence by some remark or action offensive to their religion." These expressions of Earl Browder are indications that the Communists of America may be expected to keep their antireligious attitude more in the background than has been the case heretofore.

One would naturally expect Earl Browder, therefore, to exercise caution and restraint in his public utterances as regards their attitude to religion. And yet, in the book just mentioned he makes this frank confession:

> Communists do not consider religion to be a private matter in so far as it concerns members in our revolutionary party. We stand, without any reservation, for education that will root out beliefs in the supernatural; that will remove the religious prejudices which stand in the way of organizing the masses for socialism.

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2 Page 148.

In the same book this writer states that only atheists can become members of the Communist party,[3] and he makes various other statements shedding light on the radically antagonistic attitude of American Communists toward the Christian religion. It is important to observe in this connection that, as concerns their economic program, the Communists of Russia have found it necessary to drastically retrace their steps, as may be further pointed out directly. Not by any means, however, have they made concessions in regard to their antireligious attitude. On this point they are implacable. The fact that only atheists can become members of the Communist Party, while as regards their economic program they have made concessions to capitalism, indicates that atheism, rather than economic Communism is the most fundamental principle of the party. Needless to repeat, their atheistic, antireligious attitude is one of fierce intolerance. It is an attitude of direct and outspoken opposition to the foremost principle of democracy, the free exercise of religion.

As already said, the Communist program, as published by Stalin, calls for the most radical economic revolution, including the "nationalization" (confiscation) of private property, the enforced abolition of private ownership. Never before in the history of the world has an attempt been made to force Communism on a nation. The Communist program for violent world revolution has the objective of establishing Marxism in every country. It is openly admitted by the Communists that the success of the movement necessitates the eradication of all belief in God. The curious claim is made that the universal success of the Communist revolution will mean the end of all war, a golden age of perpetual peace.

The most deplorable product of Communism in Russia is the youth of a great nation growing up under the

[3] Page 147.

influences of out-and-out atheistic propaganda. The youth of Russia have on the whole fallen prey to atheism, a fact that is easily explained. State schools alone are tolerated, and the whole school system from the grade schools to the universities has been made a vast instrument of the most blatant propaganda for atheism. Furthermore, within about ten years, forty million copies of antireligious books and pamphlets were issued and distributed by the Bolshevik government of Russia. Religious literature of any description can neither be printed nor imported.

The Communist Party of the United States of America is a section of and functions under the Comintern (Communist International). This party officially declares:

> Under the leadership of the Communist Party the workers of the United States of America will proceed from struggle to struggle [from strike to strike], from victory to victory, until rising in a revolution, they will crush the capitalistic State, establish a Soviet State, abolish the cruel and bloody system of capitalism and proceed to the upbuilding of Socialism.

Concerning certain liberal church groups and their attitude toward Communism Mr. Browder makes statements implying in fact grave indictment of these groups. He says:

> It is significant that the Communist Party has been able to achieve successful united fronts with church groups on the most important issues of the day. This is not due to any compromise with religion on our part. In fact by going among the religious masses [church groups] we are for the first time able to bring our antireligious ideas to them. Many church organizations have joined [with us] in a broad united front against war and Fascism, and are glad to find the antireligious Communists fighting alongside of them, shoulder to shoulder.

The statement that many church organizations have joined the Communists in "a united front against war and Fascism" is only too true. Communistic propa-

ganda, in which many church groups have joined, is carried on under the pretense of opposing Fascism. Very true, Fascism means dictatorship, the reverse of democracy, but when Communists in their propaganda make mention of this fact, it is clearly an instance of the pot calling the kettle black. It is an undeniable fact that Communism as established in Russia, is a ruthless dictatorship, as well as Fascism. In the United States and Canada there exists at the present time the well organized "American League against War and Fascism." In the organization of this league, Communists and near-Communists were prominent and are conspicuous in it today. One of the vice chairmen of this league is the above named Earl Browder. The thoroughly sympathetic attitude of this league toward Communism does not admit of any question; it is in fact an instrument of Communism.

The League against War and Fascism comprises many groups of church people. The president of this league, Professor Harry F. Ward, of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, is one of the leading figures in the "Methodist Federation for Social Service." It is noteworthy that conservatives in the same denomination have organized a "Conference of Methodist Laymen" for the purpose of giving information on the nature of the social gospel and exposing Communistic leanings in church groups. In the session of the General Conference of the Methodist Church held in 1936 in Columbus, Ohio, a report was presented of which the following is a part: "We regret that some [Methodist Episcopal] organizations have seen fit to ally themselves with organizations that would fight war and Fascism but which remain strangely silent upon such issues as class war and Communism."

Certain writers have admitted the possibility of Communism winning the day in America, but have ex-

pressed the opinion that in that event, American Communism would not be of the Marxian type which is now in control in Soviet Russia. In giving consideration to this question, there are a number of outstanding facts which force themselves upon our attention.

In the first place, as noted above, Marxian Communism is organized today as a political party in the United States. There are within our country at the present time twice as many bona fide members of this party as there were in Russia prior to the Bolshevist revolution. The official figures for 1936 are 41,000 in the senior party and 11,000 in the Young Communist League, or a total of 52,000 members. In California over 30,000 signatures of citizens were filed to place the Communist Party on the ballot in that state. The numbers of the Communists are continuously increasing, owing to the extensive and intensive propaganda carried on throughout America through the Communist press and other agencies. The numbers of Communist sympathizers are very great.

Secondly, there are in North America not a few prominent church people defending the view that the radically antireligious attitude of the Communists is not a matter of serious concern. Indeed, since modernism in recent decades has become less and less interested in the content of the Christian faith and is, by its own confession, taking a general nondoctrinal attitude, it follows necessarily that even belief in God is considered a secondary matter. Many religious liberals have expressed themselves to that effect; their statements, inasfar as they have come to our attention, have however been overshadowed by an assertion made by a professor in the University of London. Professor John Macmurray, in a book entitled *Creative Society,* advocating radical social and economic revolution, makes the surprising assertion that the Communists of Russia "have recov-

ered the essential core of real belief in God, which organized Christianity has in our day largely lost."[4]

Professor Macmurray bases these statements on the supposition that endeavors for the abolition of capitalism and for a new economic system constitute the essence of the Christian religion and of true belief in God. He asserts, in other words, that the atheistic Communists are Christians in a truer sense than those church people who are not given to the defence of the radical social gospel, and he adds that this is a fact, "whatever the exponents of Communism may say," that is to say, however emphatically the Communists themselves may assert that they are atheists, and however fiercely they may blaspheme the name of God, as many of them are wont to do.

Referring to Christian conservatism as pseudo-Christianity, and taking an outspokenly militant attitude toward it, Professor Macmurray, in the same work, gives this advice:

> Attack pseudo-Christianity openly and resolutely in all its forms, in the name of real Christianity. The religious revolution is the immediate and special responsibility of the Christian. Unless we vindicate the substantial material reality of our religion, we are powerless to do anything effective. There must be war to the death between real and unreal religion, even if it should cleave organized Christianity in two and destroy all its existing forms. That is the primary task.[5]

Professor Macmurray is a leader in the "Christian Left," a radical Socialist organization in England. As we have seen, he is of the opinion that the Communists' belief in Creative Society is superior to the faith of professing Christendom. There is conclusive proof that such views are spreading in America today through propaganda of the Communists and their sympathizers. A number of American writers, among them Sherwood

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[4] Page 17.
[5] Page 100.

Eddy, have expressed agreement with this opinion of Professor Macmurray, approving of his view of the Christian character of atheistic Communism. A representative of the "Christian Left" organization of England, Mrs. Donald Grant, in an address given on May 9, 1937, in New York, maintained that "Communism is an ally of Christianity, being in the Christian stream of thought and holding many, though not all, its principles in common with prophetic Christianity." It is seen then that, considered from the viewpoint of the more radical religious liberalism, the atheism of the Communists is not a serious obstacle to the spread of Communism in Christendom. Need it be said that such views regarding the supposed Christian character of Communism, as expressed by professing Christians, constitute a greater offence than Communism itself?

Sad as is this commitment of Professor Macmurray, a book published recently in America, entitled, *Towards the Christian Revolution,* takes an even more radical position, if possible, in the approval and defence of Marxian Communism. The book was written by nine Canadian scholars, all of whom belong to the United Church of Canada. At least four of the authors are ministers or teachers in theological institutions. The book was published by the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order (headquarters in Montreal, Canada). The Foreword was written by Dr. Richard Roberts, of Toronto, until quite recently moderator of the United Church of Canada.

In this book the statement is made that Jesus proclaimed Himself as the one who had come to be "an emancipator of the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives and the oppressed" (Luke 4:16-21) in a natural, literal sense.[6] The writer making this statement believes that such emancipation is implied in the term

[6] *Towards the Christian Revolution,* R. B. Y. Scott and Gregory Vlastos, Editors. Willett, Clark & Co., Chicago, p. 89.

"kingdom of God" whose coming Jesus announced. Similar views regarding the meaning of the kingdom of God have been advanced by the advocates of the social gospel in general.

Let us consider for a moment what such a proclamation on the part of Jesus would have meant. The question before us is, What would have been the nature of Jesus' intentions, if He had proclaimed Himself as the emancipator in such a sense? We should notice that a peaceable change of the economic order through legislation was unthinkable, since the government was not of a democratic character. Neither the Roman government nor the Jewish authorities would have voluntarily consented to establishing a new economic system, such as the authors of this book believe that Jesus' program called for. In the opinion of a number of American writers, among them Professor Reinhold Niebuhr, a radical change of the economic system would, even in a democracy, be possible only through violent revolution. Unquestionably an attempt on the part of Jesus to carry out such a program would have necessitated an insurrection. If He had proclaimed Himself as the emancipator of the poor and the oppressed in the natural sense, such a claim would have been an indication that He was a political agitator who undertook to incite the Jewish people to insurrection against the Roman world power.

Now this was precisely the charge which the Jewish leaders made against Jesus in Pilate's court. Their accusation was that He was a traitorous political agitator, a revolutionist who aspired at Jewish kingship. Pilate was fully aware of the absurdity of this charge, and yet he pronounced the death sentence upon Jesus as the self-appointed king of the Jews who had deserved such a sentence. Be it repeated for emphasis that neither Pilate nor the Jewish leaders believed that Jesus was guilty of the crime of which He was accused.

We see ourselves, then, face to face with the distressing fact that at this late day, in the year of our Lord 1936, a book, written by influential Christian professors, is published in America, containing assertions which imply that Jesus Christ was an insurrectionist and, as we may directly see, that His true followers will be ready to inaugurate a new social and economic system at any cost, either peaceably or through civil war.

Again, one of the authors of the book asserts that Jesus' words in Matt. 6:25-32 ("Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink," etc.) indicate that the kingdom of God whose coming He announced, involved a radical change in the economic structure of society. In the face of such an assertion the fact is to be noted that our Lord does not speak of our needs as being supplied through the civil authorities in consequence of a revolutionary change in the economic order. He says: "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

As just intimated, the book approves of bloody social revolution. One of the authors says that churches which fail to support efforts toward a peaceful social revolution have no right to condemn the more radical movements "which do not hesitate to use bloody violence." He goes on to state that there is need for a radical change "either peacefully and by consent, or bloodily and by civil war" (after the manner of the Bolshevists).[7] Thus the seal of approval is given the modern Communist movement. That such is the authors' position is made clear beyond the possibility of a doubt by passages, such as the following, "This generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of the prophet Marx."[8] As we shall directly see, "perpetual private ownership for profit" is disapproved in the Constitution of the Fellowship for

[7] Page 190. [8] Page 139.

a Christian Social Order, under whose auspices the book *Towards the Christian Revolution* was published.

Another of the authors of this book, who conceals his name under the pseudonym "Propheticus," says that Carl Marx was right in his assertion that "religion becomes the opium of the people," if it adduces supernatural sanctions for any order of society; for, so he states further, "in an unjust social order such sanction is vicious and in a just order it is unnecessary."

The book under consideration has been favorably reviewed in the liberal religious press. The most prominent modernistic journal in the United States (the Christian Century) printed a review of it under the title, "Marxist Christians Nail Their Theses to the Door." A reviewer in a theological journal says, "This is a book sure to take its place as one of the most significant of our time in the field of Christian ethics. . . . It offers the best basis to date for the emergence of a positive Christianity." And yet the supposed positive Christianity offered in this book is Marxism. While it is true that the book contains much that is merely a defence of the social gospel (not distinctly Marxist), its program for action toward carrying out the requirements of the social gospel is that of Marxism.

In view of the fact that in Russia the attempts to establish a new economic order have proved unsuccessful, as we may directly see, it may be said that the economic order existing at the present time is, roughly speaking, the same the world over. It is the economic and social order involving private ownership (capitalism) and the profit system, as distinguished from Communism. Now this order has always been followed among civilized peoples, not excluding even the religious communistic societies, such as the Hutterian Mennonites and the Shakers. In fact these societies, in the final analysis, follow the order of private ownership.

They are not communistic in the real sense. Each community in these societies constitutes, as it were, a large family. They are, communistic only in a similar sense, as are families of parents and children. Not for a moment would they believe that their community life would be practicable on a national scale. As particular societies, though not as individuals, they follow the capitalistic order. They do not believe that capitalism could be nationally abolished. — We may observe here that the economic system in vogue today is neither Christian nor non-Christian. A system approaching that of "Jerusalem which is above" is an impossibility here on earth.

There is an outstanding fact of primary importance which is wholly ignored by the authors of the book *Towards the Christian Revolution,* and indeed by the advocates of Marxism in general. It is this, that the economic arrangement in vogue at the present time in Russia, which goes by the name of Communism, is not Communism at all. And yet the present-day Bolshevik leaders of Russia have made the most earnest and persistent attempts to abolish capitalism and establish actual Communism. They are ruthless dictators, having absolute power over the population, and yet their efforts to abolish capitalism and the profit system have signally failed. The dictators, who undertook to carry out the Communist program, have in more recent years seen themselves compelled to drastically retrace their steps. Today labor is again employed in Russia on the basis of wages, and the dictators are again engaged in selling manufactured products to the population. The Bolshevists who are in control in Russia claim to be Communists, and it is true that their program is, or was, communistic, but in plain fact Communism exists in Russia today merely in concept; indeed it has been abandoned, at least in part, even in concept. And only through the most absolute dictatorship, implying complete intellectual isolation from the rest of the world,

does the Communist party in Russia find it possible to maintain itself in power.

Anyone questioning these statements regarding present conditions in Russia should not fail to read the articles published by some of the foremost writers on Russia who until recently were stanch defenders of "Communism" as existing today in Russia, but after more recent visits to Russia, have reversed their former favorable opinion. We have reference in particular to the well-known American Socialist author, Max Eastman and the Frenchman, André Gide.

Mr. Eastman, in an article entitled "The End of Socialism in Russia," printed in Harpers Magazine for February, 1937, (a synopsis was published in the Reader's Digest for April) points to facts indicating that capitalism, so far from being abolished, is flourishing in Russia today. The attempts made toward its abolition have ended in failure. Mr. Eastman says:

> The overseers, specialists, bureaucrats, and labor and collective farm aristocrats, are able to invest their incomes in government bonds which pay 7 per cent of interest, but failing that, to deposit them in savings banks where they earn 8 per cent interest.

Mr. Eastman further points out that wages of the privileged strata of the working class are from twenty to eighty times higher than the wages of the poorly paid strata. There is today in Russia "a concentration of political power and privilege in the hands of a bureaucratic caste, supporting an autocrat more ruthless than the tzars had been." "To my mind," says Mr. Eastman, "there is not a hope for a classless society in present-day Russia." The naive assumption, then, that the men of the proletariat would prove immune from the temptation of seizing political power has proved false. There is evidence of corruption in high places. Mr. Eastman points out that the Communists are attempting a totalitarian state which is not in essence dif-

ferent from that of Hitler and Mussolini. Needless to repeat, both Communism and Fascism mean the end of democracy.

André Gide, whom we have just mentioned, says in regard to the poor of Russia:

> There are too many of them—far too many. I had hoped not to see any. Add to this that philanthropy, or even plain charity, is no longer the correct thing. The state takes charge of all that. It takes charge of everything and there is no longer [supposed to be] any need for private help. This leads to a kind of harshness in mutual relations.[9]

Professor Reinhold Niebuhr published an article in the magazine "Radical Religion" on "The Moscow Trials," referring to the trials of the men prominent in the Russian government who pleaded guilty of treason, in January, 1937. Having spoken in the same connection of various popular theories concerning the coming of the kingdom of God, he speaks of present-day conditions in Russia as follows: "All these simple theories which seek to establish the kingdom of God on earth have no explanation for the Moscow trials, that is, for the appearance of the serpent in the new Garden of Eden."[10] And again Dr. Niebuhr says at the same place: "The vindictive spirit with which Stalinites hound Trotzky over the earth . . . does raise the question whether a new society creates a 'new man' quite as completely as Utopian radicals assume."

Things that have happened in Russia during the first half of the year 1937, and in fact during this year, have served to open the eyes of the world to actual conditions under Communist rule. In the terrible orgies of bloodshed many were condemned to death and executed, including eight generals of the highest rank in the Red army. These ghastly series of executions of those

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9 *The New Republic,* March 3, 1937.

10 *Radical Religion,* vol. II, No. 2, page 43.

who are prominent in the Red government reveal the true conditions under Communist dictatorship.

The failure of the attempt of the Bolsheviks in Russia to establish Communism is significant, as is also the pertinent experience of the few existing religious communistic societies. As already intimated, the Hutterian Brethren, (sometimes called Hutterian Mennonites) have for four centuries practiced the type of communism which was in vogue in the first church in Jerusalem. On the ground of their experiences they are convinced that national communism is impracticable, that it would result in unbearable hardships and would be quite irreconcilable with democratic principles. There is every indication that the economic principles of Marxism cannot be carried into practice. The persistent attempts to carry out the Marxist program, have entailed the greatest hardships upon the populace and have utterly failed. The social and economic order proposed by Marxism is clearly Utopian.

The supposition that the partial success of Communism in Russia is to be ascribed to prewar conditions in the Russian Church, is clearly a figment of Red propaganda. The people of Russia were, before the revolution, by no means dissatisfied with their church. Even today the Communist party comprises less than two per cent of the population of Russia.

As previously indicated, the preaching of the social gospel has not resulted in steps being taken toward the abolition of capitalism and of the profit system, nor has such preaching had any other tangible results, such as were looked for. Recent developments indicate, as already pointed out, that the more radical defenders of the social gospel have decided to carry the issue into the political field and to demand of legislators and governments that steps must be taken toward establishing a new economic order.

We have already made mention of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order. This organization, both in their book *Towards the Christian Revolution* and in their Constitution which was published separately, has set forth the aims which we have just stated in a way that leaves no room for misunderstanding. In their Constitution they disapprove of "perpetuating private ownership for profit" and declare their opposition to "institutions based on private property." This is Communism pure and simple.

In the Constitution of this organization it is stated that "we are opposed to capitalism because it tends toward war. . . . Wherefore we denounce war as a vicious product of capitalism, and pledge ourselves to the most effective non-co-operative action [against the governments] in which we can engage in the event of war and in times of peace." Strange indeed, that an organization approving of waging war against any non-Communist government should nevertheless claim to be pacifist. The pacifism of a party aiming for violent revolution is clearly of a dissimulating nature. Much of the pacifist antiwar propaganda in America is of a communistic character. Mr. Wythe Williams, in his book *Dusk of Empire,* points out that Russian Communism is feeding its ideas to American and British peace societies which do not realize the source of their stimulus. And yet, it is an obvious fact that many pretending pacifists are fully aware that Moscow is the source of their antiwar attitude. Of this fact the organization under consideration presents one among many examples.

One would naturally suppose that responsible men would recognize the term "Marxist Christianity" as self-contradictory. But, as we have indicated, Communism of the Marxist type is actually nurtured and de-

fended in the name of Christianity, being presented under a Christian cloak.

Now, the supposed Christian Marxism is in actuality a thing even more hideous than Bolshevist Communism. In this pretendedly Christian type of Communism Jesus Christ is represented as a revolutionist. His followers are called upon to bring about a radical social and economic revolution, either peaceably by consent (obviously an impossibility) or through civil war. The contemplated social and economic changes are identified with the true kingdom of God on earth. The carnal sword is to be used in the name of Christ in a holy war to establish His kingdom and make Him king, unless a peaceable revolution is possible. Russian Communism, it is true, advocates violent social revolution but does not do this in the name of Christ and Christianity. Strange, very strange, that the absurdity of a Marxist kingdom of God which is to be set up by the use of the sword through civil war, is not realized. Jesus Christ is to be made, as it were, the head of the proposed Marxian world state pretending to be the kingdom of God. Never was a greater insult offered our Lord.

Communism is today making marked headway in the United States and Canada through extensive and intensive propaganda which is financed largely from Moscow and against which there is an almost total lack of systematic counter effort, giving adequate information on the nature of Communism. While in Russia Christian propaganda is rigorously forbidden and is an impossibility, Communist propaganda in America is being carried on in the most effective ways. American Christianity is divided in its attitude toward this grave menace. Large sections of the church of America take an attitude of indifference, while other groups show open sympathy with Communism. The most distressing fact of the situation is, that influential men in pro-

fessing American Christendom take an active part in the support of Communist propaganda. Unbelievable, as it may seem, Marxism, as we have observed, is presented as essentially Christian and is accepted as such in certain sections of the professing Christian Church. Could there be a more striking evidence of the appalling present-day confusion prevalent in liberalistic professing Christendom!

Christian reader, you and I have a duty as concerns definite efforts to be put forth against this greatest menace to Christianity.

XXV

THE IMMORALITY OF THEOLOGICAL COUNTERFEITING

WHEN counterfeiting is mentioned in connection with the new theology, there are always those who are ready to talk of unfairness and partiality. It may be in order, therefore, to give the word, at the outset, to new theology men who frankly admit that liberalistic theologians have indulged in word-jugglery and camouflage. But before hearing the testimony of men who represent the religious liberalism, it may be well to recall that Ritschl, the father of the new theology, defended the principle that it is right and proper, in order to allay the fears of the conservatives, to express the new theological opinions in the old familiar words. In Ritschl's theology certain doctrines are substantially modified and other doctrines are radically changed, but the changed doctrines come in the expressions and phrases of the old theology; new meanings are ascribed to the old words. This means that, though the new theology differs radically from the old, it is given an orthodox appearance. It is presented under the guise of the familiar vocabulary of orthodoxy. Ever since the days of Albrecht Ritschl has theological counterfeiting been in fashion among modernists.

In recent years not a few representatives of the new theology have, as already intimated, freely confessed that camouflage and counterfeiting, as indulged in by modern theologians, is unjustifiable. President McGiffert says, for example: "Thanks to our careless thinking, to our elastic consciences, we still profess to believe these doctrines," namely some of the doctrines of Bib-

lical Christianity.[1] Professor Gerald Birney Smith, of the University of Chicago, points out that the presentation of certain new theology views by modernistic professors "is practically certain to abound in skillfully devised ambiguities which obscure rather than reveal the actual content of the theologian's thought." The same writer says further: "But if once the spirit of intellectual juggling be admitted into any procedure, it is no longer possible to claim moral superiority for it. The New Testament itself reminds us that the 'double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' "[2] This author says further:

> If there be allowed a spirit of ingenious juggling by which the newer [theological] science is made to yield something resembling the older conclusions, the sense of honor is inevitably dulled.[3] The subtle temptation to "harmonize" contradictory elements by clever analogies, so that new meaning may be read into old words and the semblance of an unchanging theology may be retained, is all too frequently yielded to.[4] New meanings are thus smuggled in under familiar labels.[5] Modern books on theology frequently indulge in clever rhetorical statements which serve, indeed, to allay the fears of conservative Christians, but which fail to meet the demands of earnest and exact thinking. Such adjustment of statements is likely to involve a failure to be thoroughly loyal either to Scripture or to the demands of criticism. And when stern loyalty is relaxed, the door to timeserving is wide open.[6]

Quite right, representatives of new theology views may, by intellectual juggling, disperse the fears of conservative Christians and persuade them of the soundness of liberalistic teachings. Too often they are successful in such endeavors. For, is not the pious language of Scripture used in the presentation of these views? Does not the coin which is offered bear the proper

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1 *The American Journal of Theology,* 1911, p. 235.
2 *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology,* p. 179.
3 The same, p. 181.
4 *The American Journal of Theology,* 1912, p. 606.
5 *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 489.
6 The same, p. 490.

superscription and symbol? What matters it to the modern conscience that the content and fabric is different from the genuine article? — But such counterfeiting is nothing less than deception — pious deception perchance. From the viewpoint of morality and common honesty it is altogether inexcusable.

A British writer says on this point, after criticizing the liberal churchmen for the practice of answering questions concerning the creed in the affirmative, when they actually disbelieve the statements: "What a pass have we come to! Here are leaders of the Church — an institution one of whose main objects is the propagation of truth — here are our spiritual pastors and masters actually asserting that it is justifiable to assert your belief in statements which you do not believe."[7] John Morley, in his book *On Compromise,* wrote: "The first advance towards either the renovation of one faith or the growth of another, must be the abandonment of those habits of hypocritical conformity and compliance which have filled the air of England of today with gross and obscuring mists." Dr. James Martineau said: "I am persuaded that honorable laymen, themselves of [liberalistic] Broad Church sympathies, are more awake than is commonly supposed to the essential immorality of the liberal clerical position."[8]

A Unitarian writer says: "I have an old friend, a clergyman of another church, who recites his creed with his congregation every Sunday. He tells me the distress it is to him that it is not his creed. That old friend of mine is trying to do his duty under fearfully difficult conditions. And they cost him his self-respect."[9] When Dr. Hugh R. Orr, of Pittsburgh, severed his connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church, to unite with the Unitarians, Bishop J. F. Berry made the remark in pub-

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[7] *The Hibbert Journal,* No. 47, p. 675.
[8] The same, No. 46, p. 333.
[9] *The Christian Register,* February 20, 1919, p. 13.

lic that "it would be far better if many ministers who are preaching the Unitarian doctrine in the Methodist Episcopal Church would be as honest as Dr. Orr." "The Unitarian Church is open to these men; why, then, sail under false colors?" asks *The Presbyterian.* "Why not be honest? Why not have the courage of their conviction?" *Zion's Advocate* said a few years ago:

When men surrender their faith in the supernatural and in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Church, and can no longer preach and teach them, why do they not, like honorable gentlemen, resign the responsibilities which they have accepted, and go out and establish a platform of their own? If they have the truth, why do they not show their confidence in their teachings by organizing their own institutions instead of continuing to receive their support from those whose beliefs they have solemnly promised to espouse? I think that common honor and honesty would lead them to such a step.[10]

A representative of the Ethical Culture movement, H. J. Bridges, of Chicago, writes:

There is nothing more repellent than the preacher who privately admits that he doesn't believe what he publicly utters. It is simply a question of common honesty and truthfulness in the pulpit. Nothing could conceivably be more demoralizing than this game of sanctified make-believe. None of the things that preachers generally denounce, and not all of them together are so profoundly corrupting, so ruinous to the very principles and standards of moral integrity as that which must be plainly called religious lying — preaching doctrine that the preacher himself thinks false. It is humbugging the naive and unwary for the glory of God and the security of your own income and social position.

Here is what the editor of the *Boston Herald* says in a recent issue about the dishonest attitude of modernists in general:

From the beginning the overwhelming majority of liberals in the orthodox churches have dodged the issues — have hedged, evaded, qualified and compromised. They have comforted their congregations with assurances that nothing was really happening in the world of religious thought, and

10 *The Bible Champion,* 1916, p. 130.

that they need not therefore be disturbed. Black they have blithely called white, and error truth. For one man in the liberal camp who has the courage of his conviction, there are a thousand, like Harry Emerson Fosdick, who shift and shuffle on every question. Now come the fundamentalists to demand a "show-down." They make their position clear and they ask that their opponents do as much!

A prominent Unitarian writer, Edmund H. Reeman, says:

> If the modernist means anything, he means, we take it, that he does *not* accept the Bible as the infallible and authoritative word of God. He means that his God and the God of the fundamentalist are as different as chalk and cheese. He means that he does *not* believe that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin, nor that His dead body was raised from a Palestinian tomb, nor that this same Christ shall ever come again in triumph from the cloud.
>
> Why, then, does he not say so in terms as unequivocal, as simple, and as straightforward as the fundamentalist uses? Why does he not openly and frankly state that, if fundamentalism is true Christianity, then he is not a Christian and has no use for Christianity?[11]

It is seen, then, that there are modernists who confess to the inexcusableness of the practice of presenting the modern liberalism under an orthodox cloak. These men are of the more radical liberalistic school and make no secret of their denial of the Christian fundamentals. But the question is here in order, Is not the position of the more radical religious liberalists even more vulnerable and inexcusable than that of the more moderate school? Is it anything less than counterfeiting and camouflage when the more outspoken modernists uphold a mere semblance of theology, though by their own confession their theology is an entirely secondary matter? Some of the liberalists have discarded every trace of the Christian faith and theology but continue to lay claim to the Christian and religious name.

A noteworthy instance of this kind is brought to our

[11] *Unity*, January 24, 1924.

attention by the book *The New Orthodoxy,* published by The University of Chicago Press. The author is Professor Edward Scribner Ames, of the University of Chicago, who is also an ordained minister in an evangelical church. Now, you would suppose a book on orthodoxy to treat on such themes as God and His holiness, sin and its wretchedness, the way of salvation, the immortality of the soul, etc. But this book on *The New Orthodoxy,* simply ignores these things. The author mentions God a few times but conceives Him (as a liberalistic reviewer has rightly said) as "only a kind of symbol for the vital spark." Personality is ascribed to Him in the sense as it is sometimes ascribed to a city or a college. Worship is held to be beneath the dignity of modern man. The reviewer already mentioned points out that "Mr. Ames is not much excited about theology. He seems, indeed, to regard theology as rather in a class with astrology," or, in other words, as superstition.[12] Notwithstanding all this, this book is given to the world under the title of *The New Orthodoxy* — a striking instance of liberalistic camouflage. *The Biblical World* is authority for the statement that the attitude to religion taken by Professor Ames "is so widely prevalent in our day as to be characteristic of it."[13]

A similar instance is that of the book, *The Next Step in Religion,* by Professor Sellars, of the University of Michigan. This book is even more outspoken in its frank denial of God, eternity and all that is supernatural; it is in fact, a defence of rank infidelity. Nevertheless it comes under the cloak of religion. The author says: "Is it justifiable to retain the term religion when its ancient setting has been so completely discarded [by the author himself]? I have myself asked this question many a time. For many years I felt that it would be better to give up the word entirely as indissolubly bound

12 *The New Republic,* May 10, 1919.
13 *The Biblical World,* January, 1919, p. 84.

up with those ideas and beliefs which the modern trained mind is outgrowing."[14] He says, he has finally decided to retain the term, but demands that "we must be firm in our negations of the old views." "If religion is to survive," this author thinks, "it must be human and social. It is they who insist upon a supernatural foundation and object who are its enemies."[15] True, the defenders of a supernatural religion, such as were Christ and the apostles and the Christian leaders of all periods, are the enemies of the sort of thing for which this author stands. What offends us in particular is that this atheistic, materialistic thing comes under a religious cloak and pretends to be a substitute for and improvement on the Christian religion. A reviewer of this book in so radically liberalistic a paper as *Unity*, says, it is neither honest nor useful for one holding such a viewpoint to lay claim to the name of religion, *"but,"* this reviewer adds, *"the use of words in a sense totally different* [from their real sense] *is a part of the obscurantism now prevalent* [in modernist circles]."[16]

It is generally admitted, as has been pointed out elsewhere, that the differences between the old and the new theology are of a vital nature and that the new theology is the result of a radical revolution. Is it not strange, therefore, that the attempt is made to carry water on both shoulders and claim adherence to the old as well as the new theological views or, as is now often the case, to openly deny the faith but retain the religious and Christian name? Many have surrendered to modernism and yet undertake to convince the conservatives that such is not the case. Or they, while frankly rejecting the Biblical theology and the old Christian faith, insist on retaining the Christian name. The case in the first instance is much the same as if a statesman who

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[14] *The Next Step in Religion*, p. 221.
[15] The same, p. 225.
[16] July 3, 1919. Italics not in original.

has stood for a given platform discarded its "planks" but not its name, and endeavored to make his old friends believe that he is loyal to the old party, while to those who accept the new platform he freely admits that he does no longer hold his former views. Should not his new friends, in their own interest censure such duplicity?

One of the great causes of the general moral decline of our time is without question the general time-serving, dissimulating, dishonest attitude of modernists as concerns the greatest religious questions. A recent writer says on this point:

> A man cannot profess one thing with his lips and believe another thing in his heart without suffering some loss of moral values, no matter what interpretation he may place upon his words. Inconsistency in religion does not end there. Nothing is more responsible for a growing loss of moral values than the kind of intellectual deceit that is so often practiced in churches. We talk about chicanery in politics and about subtlety in business, but they are well matched in many of our professions of religion; and if they sought sanction, it could be readily found in the practices of many ecclesiastical institutions.

Professor Herman Mulert, of Leipzig University, wrote: "Nothing can more deeply injure Protestant Christianity than the suspicion that the minister does not speak out freely his deepest conviction";[17] in other words, that he pretends to be orthodox when such is not the case. "Strange it is that the liberal clergymen cannot see the injury they are causing both to religion and to their church by these methods," says a British writer, referring to the practice of professing an evangelical doctrine which one does not believe. "Laymen who think and are honest are fast deserting the church, and, what is perhaps more serious, young men who think and are honest find it impossible to enroll themselves as her ministers."[18] The liberal ministry does not attract

[17] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1912, p. 311.

[18] *The Hibbert Journal,* April, 1914, p. 676.

thinking young men, as the Unitarians and other liberal churches of America have learned to their sorrow.

A most discouraging "sign of our time" is the prevalence of the practice of "hedging" among theological writers and professors. Men of high position in the church are playing fast and loose with words; they have no scruples against making a statement of their faith with mental reservations; they are trifling with the Christian religion and morality. It is all so different from the transparent candor with which the believers of all ages have stated their faith; it is even different from the method of scientists who would deem it beneath their moral dignity to stoop to such more than questionable practices. In modern theology "hedging" and camouflage has been developed into a fine art. The writer has in mind a book on prayer whose author is a pronounced liberalist. Though he does not believe in a God who answers prayer, but holds that the effect of prayer is entirely subjective, he has "hedged" to such extent and with such success that many a believing Christian has read his book, never suspecting that the author speaks of prayer in an entirely new sense and that the book is quite acceptable to radical liberalists. Many theological books are published in our day which the trained reader will recognize as unorthodox, but their authors are given to the practice of "hedging." They do not commit themselves. And again there are authors who are clearly liberalistic but it is impossible to determine their own position concerning the points on which they write. They may speak on such fundamental doctrines as the deity of Christ, the Incarnation, Atonement, and the inspiration of Scripture. The reader is fully aware that they do not defend orthodoxy but fails to find an answer to the question what sort of "doxy" they stand for, or what they mean when they treat of the said doctrines. None other than Dean Fenn, of Harvard University, says that readers of current

theological literature must often wish that every writer were obliged to furnish a glossary, explaining the meaning of the terms which he uses.[19] He adds that theological writers can hardly expect a sympathetic hearing from thoughtful men unless they are willing to let them know what they are talking about. The supreme need of modern liberalism, Dean Fenn says further, is for definite and precise thinking and direct, plain speaking.

The unvarnished fact is that a large number of theological books has been published concerning which it must be said, that it is impossible for the readers to know what the authors are talking about. And those for whom these unreal, noncommittal books were written are men and women who, in their own opinion, are too far advanced in mental development to accept the doctrines of the Christian faith. Could there be more convincing proof of the superficiality of modern liberalistic thought? Yet it is to this very characteristic of hedging that some of the most widely used theological books owe their popularity. A British reviewer of the *Theology* by William Newton Clarke says: "In America the fashion seems to be to defend a foregone conclusion by rhetoric. This makes the reviewing of the book before us a peculiarly difficult task. It contains a great deal of what is known as 'hedging.' "[20]

From the viewpoint of general morality and common honesty theological hedging and camouflage must be unconditionally condemned. Such practices are unworthy of persons of serious purpose. A man writing a book on theology who is unwilling to commit himself and to let his readers know what he is talking about is clearly a double-minded man — a sorry figure morally. It will be recalled that our Lord unscathingly censured the Pharisees and referred to them as blind leaders of the blind. The greatest of the Pharisees, Saul of Tar-

19 *The American Journal of Theology,* 1913, p. 518.
20 *The Hibbert Journal,* vol. VIII, p. 210.

sus, testifies concerning himself after his conversion that his Phariseeism was due to blindness. On the other hand, the modern theological hedgers have not sufficient faith in their modern faith to confess it. They refuse to commit themselves on the greatest religious questions and are purposing in their heart, as it were, to let "the blind" go on in their way. They do not offer them light as they conceive of it. They write books on theology, yet their great care is, not to commit themselves on the points in question, but to hide their own position — if they have a position to hide. Some of them boast that they are not so conceited as to think they have any knowledge about the deep religious questions.

The practice of using words and phrases in a new and unreal sense which greatly modifies or annuls the real sense, and refusing to reveal what meaning is put into these words, such a practice would not be tolerated for a moment in any other line of study. It is a characteristic feature of modern theology, a sad comment on modern religious conditions, a striking testimony to the shallowness of the spirit of the age.

A further evidence of an unsound moral attitude is found in the fact that some of the modernized seminaries not only stand for "counterfeiting" and "hedging" but they do so against the express will of the churches who own and support the seminaries. Without scruple, as it seems, the new theology men, though they admit that their teaching differs radically from the old faith, are occupying institutions and using money designed to the maintenance and propagation of the primitive Bible faith. It will be recalled that the Unitarians were successful in the attempt to appropriate to themselves many church houses and other church property of evangelical congregations. In a similar manner liberalism has captured seminaries of orthodox Christian bodies. Mission money given by consecrated Christians

for the propagation of the Gospel is used by liberalists for the purpose of modernizing the Christian converts from heathenism. All this is morally altogether indefensible.

On the occasion of the publication of Professor George Burman Foster's principal work a Chicago daily newspaper made the following editorial comment on the situation in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago:

> We are struck, also, with the *hypocrisy* and *treachery* of these attacks on Christianity. This is a free country and a free age, and men can say what they choose about religion, but this is not what we arraign these divinity professors for. They are to be criticized on other grounds.
>
> Is there no place in which to assail Christianity but a divinity school? Is there no one to write infidel books except the professors of Christian theology? Is a theological seminary an appropriate place for a general massacre of Christian doctrine?
>
> We are not championing either Christianity or infidelity, but only condemning infidels masquerading as men of God and Christian teachers.

A remarkable fact deserves to be noticed here, namely that some of those who do not seem to be offended by the counterfeiting and camouflage of liberalism, insist that the old Bible faith is selfish and immoral. Dr. Herbert Alden Youtz, of Oberlin Seminary, says, for example: "Surely the time has come to insist that illiberalism and conservatism are immoral and unspiritual in a world of progress."[21] President A. C. McGiffert thinks "religion must eschew altogether its *egoistic* and otherworldly character. There can be no compromise on this point. — The religion of democracy must cease to *minister to selfishness* by promising personal salvation and must cease to impede human progress by turning the attention of religious men from conditions here to rewards elsewhere."[22] Could it be, then,

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21 *Democratizing Theology*, p. 13.
22 *Religious Education*, June, 1919, p. 160. Italics mine.

that our Lord and His apostles, by administering to the spiritual needs of men and showing them the way of personal salvation, led them in a selfish, immoral way? Or is, on the contrary, the denunciation of personal salvation a cause for the present general moral decline?

It is interesting to notice, in this connection, that the new theology rejects also the Biblical doctrine of the Atonement as immoral. It is immoral, they say, that a judge sentence one person to bear another's sins. That this is said in connection with the Atonement is due to a strange perversion of this Bible doctrine. The fact is that no one was compelled to suffer for another's sin. God Himself became man in order that He might, of His own free will, bear the sin of the world. Christ is God. He became man and acted in accordance with the Father's will when He became the sin-bearer of the world. The Father, according to the eternal plan of love "laid upon him the iniquity of us all," but He did so in accordance with the Son's own free will and plan. And mark well, the purpose of it all was to do the wonderful work of grace for those who accept the great sacrifice, namely to put away their sin and effect in them a miraculous change of heart, that henceforth they will not serve sin. To say that this greatest of all divine plans and works is of an immoral character, is to take what, for want of a more appropriate name, may be fitly called a satanic view of the Atonement. It is very peculiar (is it not?) that men who defend theological counterfeiting and similar modern practices make the astonishing assertion that they consider the Biblical doctrine of the Atonement immoral. Their conscience will not permit them, they say, to accept what is in truth the greatest and most wonderful deed of a holy God. Here, if anywhere, the words of Paul, Rom. 1:22, are certainly applicable.

XXVI

MODERN THEOLOGY IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD WAR

PROFESSOR George Burman Foster referred occasionally to "our bewildered and discouraged religious life."[1] Need it be repeated that general religious bewilderment has followed in the wake of the modern denial of Scripture authority? The confusion prevalent in liberalistic circles has been greatly aggravated by the world war. The fact is that the great war has clearly shown the unreality of the foundations of religious liberalism. As early as in the second year of the war it was predicted by liberalists that the international conflict would probably result in a loss to religious liberalism.

In the opinion of Professor John Wright Buckham who represents the more advanced liberalistic school, the war has shown "with especial vividness" that liberalism "was too optimistic."[2] A Unitarian editor says:

> Another mistake that Unitarians are liable to is making religion too easy. We Unitarians are temperamentally optimists. We believe in human nature and in the progress of humanity. We have too easily assumed that evolution is an irresistible force impelling men upward whether they will or no [in other words that religion is really a secondary matter in "our splendid cosmic climb"]. *Such inevitable moral advance can no longer be asserted.* Here is a great part of the world back in barbarism again, back to primitive brutalities, fears, hates, and horrors. No languid optimism is preachable in such a time as this. — Religion administered in sugar-coated pills will not cure a mad world.[3]

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1 *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion*, p. 749.

2 *Progressive Religious Thought in America*, p. 315.

3 *The Christian Register*, May 9, 1918.

Dr. Richard Roberts, of the Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn, wrote:

> On the whole things were going on very well indeed. The old chariot of progress was forging its way bravely up the hill and presently we should arrive. Just where we were going to arrive did not seem very clear. That, however, did not matter. Wherever it was, we were getting there. And now the chariot has been suddenly and awfully pitched over a precipice and we are writhing at its foot in blood and tears. We had said complacently that the "ape and tiger" were at the point of death; behold they have turned upon us and are rending us to pieces. The moral tragedy of the world is being enacted in a muddy, bloody horror before our eyes, and our little fantastic dreams of progress are looking very futile and cheap over against this vast catastrophe. This war is the greatest revelation of the moral perversity of man since Calvary. The one thing we cannot do after this is to belittle sin or explain it away.[4] The history which has culminated in the present catastrophe vindicates beyond a peradventure the New Testament diagnosis of our human distemper, and it leaves us no room for hope save in the New Testament remedy. In the place of the futilities of a genial culture gospel we must bring to the world again the power and the hope of a conversion gospel.[5]

These confessions of liberalistic writers are of great significance. They show that the world war has, in the opinion of these writers, proved the erroneousness of the most fundamental teachings of religious liberalism; in other words, they are confessions to the bankruptcy of the modern theology. The great war is unanswerable proof that, despite the belief in man's natural goodness and in the world as God's kingdom; despite the "genial culture gospel" of social and moral improvement, of education and material advancement, the nature of the world has not changed. The world is, in the final analysis, as antagonistic to true Christianity as it ever was. The advance of civilization has given the world a pleasing veneer, but has not changed its heart. Liberalistic

[4] *The Biblical World*, November, 1918, p. 281.
[5] The same, p. 286.

leaders now confess openly, as we have seen, that, in the light of the great war, their own gospel of moral and social advancement is not adequate to the great need of the human heart and of the world. Some of them admit now that a supernatural revelation of God is needed and that no other remedy for human sin will suffice than the New Testament remedy: a divine work of grace in the human heart.

Now liberalism does not have these things to offer. To say that they are needed is to confess that modern theology is fundamentally erroneous. This means that liberalism is confessing to its own inner collapse, its bankruptcy. On the other hand it means also that there never was so opportune a time to show the true character of liberalism and to spread the New Testament message, as the present.

Dr. Clarence E. Macartney wrote:

> When man faces the overwhelming facts of sin, passion, pain, sorrow, death, and the beyond-death, the glib and easy phrases of current Modernism and flippant Liberalism are found to be nothing but a broken reed. Therefore, he who preaches historic Christianity and takes his stand upon a divine revelation has, amid the storms and confusions and darkness of our present day, an incomparable position.

In Germany modern theology has experienced a decided setback, a weakening all along the line.[6] Dr. William H. Drummond, secretary of the International Congress of Religious Liberals, says that "owing to the war various liberal religious groups in practically all the countries in Europe have become disheartened."[7] Dr. Adolph Keller, of Switzerland, in an article on *Protestantism in Europe Today,* says: "Our liberal-minded spiritual parentage in Central Europe is in a much more dangerous situation than the conservative

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[6] Compare article by Professor Heinrich Weinel in *The Hibbert Journal* for January, 1924.

[7] *The Christian Register,* October 25, 1923.

elements" in those parts. He says further: "Liberal periodicals in Germany can hardly be maintained without foreign help. The only liberal missionary society on the Continent [in Germany] is in greatest peril." Unmistakably the world war has served to show the inherent weakness, the unreality of modernism.

XXVII

THE FAILURE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM

WE HAVE in recent years heard much about the waning influence and inefficiency of the church. The cause is often said to be her unmodernism, the conservatism of her creed. Many liberal writers have asserted that the church is doomed if she persists to stand for Biblical orthodoxy. The way and the only way to save the church, we are told, is to open her gates to the modern liberalism, the new theology. This is the view generally held in liberalistic circles, as could be easily shown by quotations, were it not quite well known.

So much more remarkable is the fact that not a few liberalistic writers frankly admit the inefficiency of the religious liberalism as compared with the old Bible faith. The new theology has in fact been tried out by the Unitarians and others and has proved a failure. It has not brought to the church the promised prosperity but has brought inefficiency and decay. So well known is this fact to those who have made investigation that it cannot be ignored by the representatives of liberalism. Some of them have, as already intimated, admitted it in their writings. A number of new theology writers are here quoted on the subject under consideration.

Dr. Douglas Clyde Macintosh, of Yale University, admits freely that "the old Christianity was positive and vital," while the message of religious liberalism "has been predominantly negative." "But mere negation," he says further, "is not enough"; denial alone will not suffice.[1] In an article, written jointly by a few of the professors of the University of Chicago, the confession is made: "That there are undeniable losses in the de-

[1] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1914, p. 554.

parture from orthodoxy ought to be recognized."[2] Dr. W. H. P. Faunce, of Brown University, a leading modernist, says: "Under the old theology there was a spirit of reverence and obedience now often totally lacking."[3] Professor Gerald Birney Smith, of the University of Chicago, writes: "Precisely those people, whose thoughtfulness and conscientious intelligence are imperatively needed in the work of the church, are also painfully aware that as yet nothing of a strong positive character has come to take the place of the older type of theology."[4] Professor Durant Drake, of Vassar College, makes this confession: "But if we are candid, we must admit that upon its constructive side [liberal] theology has less to show. We can raise far more problems than we can solve; and we know far less about the great enigmas than men once thought they knew. The situation is far from satisfactory."[5] "We have discarded the old piety," this author says further, "but have not worked out new methods to produce the type of character we want."[6] Again this author says: "We have not found out how to develop piety in the new way."[7] President McGiffert speaks of our liberalistic time as "this time of confusion and upheaval."[8]

Professor Edward Caldwell Moore raises the questions: "Why do traditionalists [conservatives] often fail of religious effectiveness? Why, however, do progressives [speaking of liberalists] fail still more often?"[9] The same writer admits the fact that "the liberal movement in the nineteenth century illustrates often *the disintegrating and devastating effects of liberalism.*"[10]

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[2] The same, 1913, p. 97.
[3] The same, 1916, p. 338.
[4] The same, 1912, p. 606.
[5] *Problems of Religion,* p. 413.
[6] *Religious Education,* 1919, p. 313.
[7] *The Christian Register,* March 27, 1919, p. 10.
[8] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1911, p. 3.
[9] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1912, p. 4.
[10] The same, p. 5.

Under new theology influences, he says further, "there has been less evidence of this consuming anxiety for the spiritual life of man, less of this moving instinct of responsibility, less of the spirit of that outgoing care for souls which quickens men to ardent adventure and puts them upon heroism and self-sacrifice."[11] In another instance, Professor Moore says: "If there is always to be a superiority of Christian devotion, of a zeal for God and love of man, on the side of the conservatives; if there is always to be a religious inferiority of liberals, then it will still be to the conservatives that we shall owe the best of the world's work."[12]

Only the conservative theologians, says the liberalistic thinker, Professor G. Santayana, of Harvard University, "have anything to say to the poor, or to the rich, that can refresh them." This writer points out that in a frank supernaturalism "lies the sole hope of the church." "Its sole dignity also lies there," he says further. "As to modernism, it is suicide [for the church]. It is the last of those concessions to the spirit of the world which half-believers and double-minded prophets have always been found making; but it is a mortal concession. It concedes everything, for it concedes that everything in Christianity, as Christians hold it, is an illusion."[13] "The modern liberalistic view," the same writer confesses, "takes the seriousness out of religion; it sweetens the pang of sin which becomes misfortune; it steals the empirical reality away from the last judgment, from hell and from heaven; it steals historical reality away from the Christ of religious tradition and personal devotion."[14]

The late Professor George Burman Foster, of the University of Chicago, in the preface to a volume in

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11 The same, p. 11.
12 The same, 1913, p. 25.
13 *Winds of Doctrine,* 1913, p. 56.
14 The same, p. 5.

which he questions or denies all the Christian fundamentals, makes the remarkable confession that he does not desire this book to fall into the hands of those who yet cling to the old faith. "I could wish with all my heart," he says further, "that our fathers and mothers might enjoy the blessed calm of the evening life free from the spiritual bewilderment of those who have to wander in the region of doubt and to feel their feet slip just when they thought that some rock on which they stood was firm." This author admits that "the full and solid comfort and hope which warmed the hearts and illuminated the faces of the fathers" is now absent. He tells us that he has simply endeavored in this volume "to cleave to the sunnier side of doubt." In conclusion he expresses the wish that "there may *be light and warmth enough to keep us from freezing in the dark.*"[15] Strange as it may seem, Professor Foster in the same book lauds doubt to the skies as one of the greatest assets to religious life.[16] He wrote this book in 1909 and his later writings show that in more recent years he came to the conclusion that religious assurance ("a rock on which we could stand firm") is neither possible nor needful to find.

Professor Thomas N. Carver, of Harvard University, in an article, *What Ails the Church?* points out that the impotence of the liberal church is due to "the loss of a definite, soul-compelling purpose or program." He says further:

> Formerly the church knew exactly what it was for; now it does not seem quite certain. Then there was no wavering; now those churches which are not merely drifting are running around in a circle looking for some "cause" to espouse, or something vaguely called "social service" to perform. Then the church preached a clear and definite gospel of salvation, with damnation as the unattractive alternative; now

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[15] *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence*, 1909. Italics mine.

[16] The same, p. 133.

it is not considered quite polite in the best religious circles to mention damnation, and, since there is nothing very definite to be saved from, salvation has lost its meaning. If the [liberal] church had a definite, soul-compelling purpose, we should find the liberal churches either progressing, or at least decaying less rapidly than the more narrowly orthodox churches. *But the opposite is the case.*[17]

A Unitarian writer observes: "Some people say the religious liberal is often more liberal than religious. *Why is this true?* One reason is that he has lost interest in the old forms of religion without gaining enthusiasm for the new."[18] The editor of the Unitarian official organ says: *"There is far deeper conviction among the people who stand fast in the old order of doctrine than there is among those in the new."*[19] Professor William Adams Brown, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, wrote:

> What is to become, we are asked, of Sunday-observance, church-going, family worship, the habit of Bible reading and of daily prayer, if no firmer basis can be provided for their support than the generalities of the new theology? And we ourselves, when we consider the easy-going religion which is all about us, often share this feeling, and wish now and again that we could recover the unquestioning faith of an earlier age, even at the price of some of its intolerance and narrowness.[20]

Professor Albert Parker Fitch, of Amherst College, observes: "The great failure of the new age was and is that it has not yet found, or at any rate not wholeheartedly accepted any adequate substitute [for the old theology]." This writer realizes that many who have discarded the older religious views "practically annihilate the distinction between good and evil and abandon themselves to a sort of emotional chaos and moral senti-

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17 *The Harvard Theological Review*, 1915, p. 381 f. Italics mine.
18 *The Christian Register*, July 8, 1920, p. 19.
19 The same, January 6, 1921, p. 3. Italics mine.
20 *The Harvard Theological Review*, January, 1911, p. 17.

mentalism. Such extreme individualism is common and lamentable enough."[21]

Clearly religious liberalism, having not yet found an acceptable substitute for the old faith, no solid foundation upon which to build, is in a bad way. Small wonder that liberalists speak of "our bewildered and discouraged religious life."[22] What a contrast between the old Christian faith and the modern liberalistic religion expressing the pious hope that "there may be light and warmth enough to keep us from freezing in the dark."

Modernists have commonly supposed that the principle of liberty would serve as a foundation for a modernist religious structure, and a substitute for the Christian faith. We shall presently see that the Unitarians, for example, are united on no other ground than liberty. Every church or congregation is strictly autonomous — a law unto itself — in matters of teaching and practice. More recently various leading modernists have apparently become disillusioned on this point. They begin to realize that liberty, being in itself a negative principle, does not offer a real foundation for a religious union. A noted Unitarian writer raised the question, "Is the church to become a 'free church' only, or is it to become a church with a purpose also? Would a church that is merely free be worth the energy to hold it together?"[23] Dr. F. Dijkema, a modernist Mennonite minister in Amsterdam, Holland, wrote an article admitting that the principle of liberty has proved a foundation of sand. He realizes that modernism is lacking a foundation and, unless a foundation may be found, it has no future as a substitute for Christianity. He says:

Modernism has found it impossible to create for itself a theological foundation; it has no unifying theology, no common fundamental principle, and secondly, the masses of the people have not been attracted by it; we did not succeed in

[21] *Can the Church Survive?* p. 72.
[22] *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,* p. 749.
[23] *The Christian Register,* February 12, 1920, p. 11.

the effort to interest them in the liberalistic teachings. We have no settled points of doctrine, but what do we have? Is there not more clearness of aim needed, a greater certainty than we now have?

The question remains, Can there be found for modernism a positive fundamental principle? It has been supposed that the principle of liberty or freedom will serve this purpose. But, as Professor Opzoomer has rightly said, "To be a Protestant it is not sufficient to have a zeal for liberty. It is true that the principle of faith loses its strength without the principle of freedom, but the principle of freedom is meaningless without the principle of faith." Liberty is after all a negative conception and can therefore not be considered the common fundamental principle of the modernists. Professor Roessingh has shown that now, since the modernists have dropped the belief in an authoritative divine revelation, they are lacking a foundation.[24]

In the years preceding the appearance of the third edition of this book (1937) the impotence of liberalism to accomplish anything of permanent worth has become more and more obvious. Even prominent liberal leaders have freely admitted this to be a fact. We shall quote a number of them. Harry Emerson Fosdick said in a sermon: "Modernism has been dangerously sentimental" in its "illusory belief in inevitable progress." "For two whole generations modernists were fairly bewitched into thinking that every day in every way man was getting better and better." George Betts, professor of Religious Education in Northwestern University, speaks of the "religious chaos" which has taken the place of the old orthodoxy, and says further:

> Modernism seemingly has spent itself in a gospel of protest and has not come forward with anything spiritually compelling to take the place of what it rejects.[25]

Professor Henry P. van Dusen, of the Union Theological Seminary (New York), a radically liberalistic institution, in an article on "The Sickness of Liberal

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[24] *De Zondagsbode,* (Leiden, Holland), June 24, 1923.
[25] *The Christian Century,* July 8, 1931.

Religion" says: "Liberal religion has reached the climax of its strength and can no longer hold its own"; and again, "liberal Christianity is slowly but decisively losing ground. Certainly that is the opinion of most intelligent outsiders, even the most friendly."[26] Professor Reinhold Niebuhr, of the same institution, in an article entitled, "Let Liberal Churches Stop Fooling Themselves," says: "Liberal religion is not now an effective agent of moral redemption in our contemporary society."[27] Professor Walter Marshall Horton points out that the founders of the liberal religious education movement and the social gospel movement had been reared under evangelical influences and only in later years accepted liberal views, but, he says, "they have yet to produce in the younger generation a religious passion and a stalwartness of character comparable with their own."[28] Professor Henry Nelson Wieman, in an article on "Fundamentalism Vs. Liberalism" states that "liberalism is doomed."[29] Professor Wieman defends a variant of religious liberalism which he names radicalism.

Shirley Jackson Case, dean of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, in his recent book, *Highways of Christian Doctrine,* says some noteworthy things concerning the question of the bankruptcy of modernism. His expressions on this point are evidently due to the fact that various prominent modernists have frankly conceded that modernism has failed; some have said that it is bankrupt. Professor Case repudiates the idea of the bankruptcy of modernism. He is of the opinion that bankruptcy was possible only in so far as modernism has ascribed finality to any point of doctrine or creed. He holds that to the extent that modernism

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[26] *The World Tomorrow,* August, 1931.
[27] *The Christian Century,* March 25, 1931.
[28] *A Psychological Approach to Theology,* Page 125.
[29] *Crozer Quarterly,* April, 1931.

has done so, it has ceased to be modernism. Evidently, then, he does not deny that modern religious liberalism, such as was in the last decades generally known as modernism, has failed.

Professor Case freely acknowledges the fact that liberalism does not have positive religious truth to offer. And not only does he make this admission but he says, it is a mistake even to *seek* finalities. Seeking finalities, he thinks, will only lead to the final acknowledgment of error. He is evidently aware that eventually it will be realized that modernists, denying the reality of divine revelation, have no valid ground for teaching positive religious truth. He contends that the remedy for the failure of modernism is *more modernism.*

Now modernism, as we know it today, means the more or less radical repudiation of the historic Christian faith. Clearly it is difficult to perceive that there could be a more radical denial of the faith than that made in the last decades by the institution with which Professor Case is identified. He proposes that modernism should become, as it were, more modernistic. Could this proposal have any other meaning but that to the repudiation of the historic Christian faith other denials must be added to save modernism and make it a success? At any event, Professor Case is evidently of the opinion that modernists should cease giving their message the appearance of being based on positive truth; they should freely and openly admit that they have no finalities to offer. Let us hope that this advice may be heeded.

This book of Professor Case offers convincing proof that the radical religious liberalism, as represented by him and many other professors in the liberalistic theological seminaries, is simply religious agnosticism, the denial of the knowableness of things divine. But is not the admission that the message of liberalism is one of religious agnosticism, in itself a striking proof of bankruptcy? Or could any religious value be ascribed to a

message of agnosticism? Robert G. Ingersoll, the eloquent agnostic, in passing, never made any claim of a religious value of his message. On the contrary, he held that religious agnosticism means the bankruptcy of religion, including liberal religion.

Pity the pretended Christian worker whose message does not differ materially from that of Robert Ingersoll. Pity the preacher who takes the attitude of a religious agnostic, having no message of positive truth; and pity the congregation that is expected to endure such preaching. Can they be blamed for slackness in church attendance?

A large number of quotations from the writings of prominent modernists could be given who in more recent years (the thirties of the present century) have freely admitted the utter failure of religious liberalism in every way. In confessing to this failure these writers overlook the fact that they themselves are liberalists denying authoritative revelation. Their adversative criticism of religious liberalism involves their own position.

XXVIII

THE FAILURE OF UNITARIANISM

THE Unitarian church of America is the result of a division which took place early in the last century in the Congregational Church. There arose in this church a faction denying the deity of Christ. The church took a decided position on this question and a division resulted. As regards the doctrinal position of the early Unitarians, it should be noted, first of all, that they believed the doctrine of the sinfulness of man to be a mere figment of the imagination and in fact a source of evil. They were of the opinion that a great moral reformation would result from the rejection of the Biblical doctrine of sin and the acceptance of the idea of inherent human goodness. The time was at hand, they said, when the Christian church, in order to enjoy prosperity, must preach "the rectitude and dignity of human nature," making supernatural salvation superfluous. At any rate those who were born in Boston and vicinity, so the common facetious saying was, had no need of being born again. The fact is, the Unitarians teach that regeneration is not needed to implant the divine life, nor is divine grace needed for the development of such life.

Dr. Samuel A. Eliot, the President of the American Unitarian Association, has, with the co-operation of another Unitarian minister, written an article in which he says, not only Christianity but "all religions have this [essential] religion of the spirit."[1] From this statement it might be inferred that, in order to be saved, it is, in his opinion, necessary to accept some religion, be it Christianity or another religious system. This is not Dr. Eliot's view, however. The Unitarian Church

[1] Article *Unitarians,* in *The New International Encyclopedia.*

teaches that the natural religion which every person possesses is sufficient for salvation. According to Unitarianism the divine is naturally in man, even the most degraded and depraved, and it may be developed by natural means, just as the oak is developed from the acorn. If it remains undeveloped, the loss is not great, for he is saved nevertheless. Therefore, when Dr. Eliot says that "all religions have this religion of the spirit," he does not mean that persons who do not formally adhere to any religion are devoid of the religion of the spirit.

As for sin, it does not figure large in Unitarian, or in general liberalistic teaching. The acceptance of the idea of God's immanence takes away the sting. Sin does not really matter much. "We do not know what to do with sin," said a speaker in a Unitarian convention held in Philadelphia a few years ago. Since the Unitarian Church teaches that "all men are God's children," there is no need of a Savior. A good example, such as Jesus gave us, is desirable, but it is not essential. The idea of the supernatural is rejected. As for the immortality of the soul, the Unitarian Church is on this point, as on all other doctrinal points, strictly neutral. As a church they do not teach that the soul survives the death of the body. "Unitarianism is belief in the humanity of God and the divinity of man," as one of the official statements of Unitarian teachings has it.[2]

"The first and most fundamental characteristic of Unitarianism is that it is an undogmatic church," says Professor Christie, of the Unitarian seminary in Chicago; "it is a church without a creed and without official theology."[3] And again this writer says: "The Unitarians have no creed and exclude no one from fel-

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[2] *Declaration of Belief of Western Unitarian Churches,* adopted May 19, 1887.

[3] *The American Journal of Theology,* 1917, p. 554.

lowship because of doctrinal opinions."[4] This means that doctrinally the Unitarians do not take any position. To them any doctrine is acceptable so long as it is not believed to be essential or accepted as a creed. There is, practically, only one exception to this statement. The Unitarians are not kindly disposed to the old evangelical faith. They devote their energies to combating Biblical orthodoxy. Provided, however, that the old faith is discarded, they as a church, believe that nothing really matters in the way of doctrine. It has sometimes been supposed that Unitarians have a creed, since some of their conferences are agreed on the idea of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. But their own assertion that they are a creedless church is evidently correct. In fact, there are Unitarians who do not believe in a personal God; hence to them the phrase "God's fatherhood" has no real meaning. Some of the Unitarian ministers teach rank atheism.

The Unitarian message does not materially differ from that of religious liberalism in general. It is of a negative character, a denial of the Christian truth. The content of the message of modern liberalism is, as we have seen, that all men are divine, whether or not they desire to be, and do not need vital salvation. In other words, liberalism teaches that neither Christianity nor any other religious system has an essential message of salvation, and no such message is needed. Unitarian preachers, as well as liberalists who are not identified with the Unitarians, have boasted that they are not so narrow as to think that what they preach is essentially better than the ideas of those who differ from them (provided they be not orthodox Christians). Indeed to advance the opinion that there is no vital difference between Biblical and non-Biblical religious teaching is the

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[4] *United States Census Report. Religious Bodies;* 1906, Part 2, p. 841.

only consistent position for those who deny the inspiration of Scripture and do not claim to have an authoritative message from God. But the fact cannot be ignored that a church taking such an attitude necessarily makes the impression of being run for the purpose of apologizing for its own existence. A Unitarian minister writes:

> Lacking sadly the goodness of the Bible type, we are resorting to all sorts of material devices to inform people who are not the least interested in what we are doing or in what we propose to do, that we are in existence, and that if they do not help to fill our depleted ranks we must soon go out of existence. *All these measures to revive a dying church would be comical were they not so tragical.*[6]

"In the absence of some kind of doctrine of salvation," says Professor Thomas N. Carver, of Harvard University, "Christian work has lost its definite meaning; it means little more than to persuade people to join the church." Again Professor Carver says: "This perpetual program for membership [without a message of salvation] brings the church under that class of organisms whose energy is all expended in keeping alive in trying to save their own life. Such an organism ought to die, and in a rational universe it must eventually die."[7] Since, according to the declaration of a Unitarian conference, "the progress of mankind is onward and upward forever," the task of the church is, to all appearances, not a serious one, so much the less as Unitarians, with other religious liberalists believe that Jesus never founded a church. The Unitarians do not look upon the church as a distinct spiritual covenanted body, but rather as nothing more than a society. Significantly the editor of *The Christian Register* says, the *Register* is not only the organ of the members of the Unitarian Church, but of "the increasing thousands of liberals in

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[6] *The Christian Register,* August 26, 1920, p. 13. Italics mine.

[7] *The Harvard Theological Review,* 1915, p. 384 f.

every other denomination in Christendom, and of course *in other faiths besides*. And we are mindful of the perhaps even largest number of all who for reasons sufficient unto their own hearts are outside any church or religious body. All these are our normal constituency."[8] Taking such facts into consideration it is plausible that James Freeman Clarke, the noted liberalistic historian, could rightfully say: "The Unitarian churches of Boston see no reason for diffusing their faith. They treat it as a luxury to be kept for themselves. . . . I have heard it said that they do not wish to make Unitarianism too common."[9] "Perhaps no churches have shown less sense of responsibility for the population of a given precinct," says Dr. L. W. Bacon.[10] Ralph Waldo Emerson, a leader of Unitarian thought, once referred to Unitarianism as *"an ice chest."*[11]

Concerning the favorable conditions which marked the beginnings of the Unitarian Church in America, Dr. George E. Ellis, a Unitarian theologian and author, says the Unitarians from the beginning were confident that before fifty years should have passed "orthodoxy would have become a thing of the past while Unitarianism would be the prevailing type of religion."[12] Dr. L. W. Bacon, in *The Story of the Churches,* writes:

> Never in all the course of church history has a new religious movement started with so magnificent a send-off as this. The venerable college at Cambridge was under its control. Besides the church buildings, productive funds for religious uses amounting, it was estimated, to $600,000 [a very large sum at that time] were in its possession. The wealth, culture, and social influence of Boston were Unitarian. The Unitarian clergy list was such a roster of splendid names as no clergy of like number in Christendom could show. There was much to justify the prophecy that was uttered that the

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8 *The Christian Register,* October 31, 1918. Italics mine.
9 Bacon, *The Congregationalists,* 1904, p. 251.
10 The same, p. 173.
11 *The Harvard Theological Review,* 1918, p. 304.
12 Dunning, *Congregationalists in America,* 1894, p. 302.

Unitarians would presently become the prevailing form of American Christianity.[13]

Never prophets proved more sadly mistaken than those who predicted that the Unitarians would outdistance the other denominations. The Unitarian Church never showed real vitality. It has remained numerically weak and today has the unmistakable evidences of anemia and decay. As early as the year 1839, the Unitarian leader, Dr. W. E. Channing, wrote: "I would that I could look to Unitarianism with more hope. But this system, being a protest against certain dogmas, rather than the work of deep religious principle, was early paralyzed by the mixture of material philosophy and fell too much into the hands of scholars and political reformers, and the consequence is a lack of vitality and force."[14]

The Unitarians have no foreign mission work. In the homeland they are carrying on a work of literature distribution, devoting the income of a fund of about a million dollars to this purpose. Hundreds of thousands of booklets and tracts are annually sent free to those who desire to read them, and space is bought in newspapers for the dissemination of Unitarian teachings. In this way not a few members of other denominations have been won for liberalism. "Unitarians have been reproached," says the editor of the leading Unitarian paper, "because their membership is largely made up of those who were formerly of another persuasion."[15] However, it is by no means the case that all who, through Unitarian influence, accept the liberalistic position and renounce their membership in evangelical churches, cast their lot with the Unitarian Church. Evidently many religious liberals, including the great majority of those who were brought up in Unitarian fam-

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[13] *The Story of the Churches,* 1904, p. 170.
[14] The same, p. 316.
[15] *The Christian Register,* August 14, 1919, p. 3.

ilies, are of the opinion that a position of general doctrinal indifferentism and neutrality makes the existence of the church superfluous. The average man who accepts the Unitarian message fails to see a valid purpose for a church and hence does not join the Unitarian connection. It is a significant fact that, as already said, Unitarians fail to win the great majority of their own children for their society.

A noted Unitarian minister, Dr. Charles E. Park, observes that there is in the Unitarian Church "a predominance of gray heads and noticeable lack of young people."[16] Again a writer in *The Christian Register* says, " 'The Unitarian Church is the church of the mature mind and confirmed heart.' This was the reply of a Unitarian minister to the question as to why there are so few young people in our church."[17] Another writer in the same periodical, referring to the Unitarian denomination, speaks of *"our anaemia and our slow dying rate."*[18] Again a writer in the same paper, a Unitarian minister, says: "The fact that our church is dying has frightened us into nervous activity which might well be directed toward a search for the cause."[19] Ernest J. Bowden writes in the Unitarian organ:

> I have worshipped with many groups of religious liberals from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and have often been amazed to find that they have completely lost the power of intensive devotion. Many of our meetings are held without prayer or its equivalent. It is not that our people are without religion, but they are spendthrift, living on the capital of the past, on the prayers of the generations departed.[20]

If we raise the question of the deeper causes of Unitarian inefficiency, and decay, we find some striking answers in the leading Unitarian organ. A writer in this

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16 *The Christian Register*, June 5, 1919, p. 5.
17 The same, November 13, 1919, p. 5.
18 The same, March 21, 1918, p. 2. Italics mine.
19 The same, September 2, 1920, p. 9.
20 *The Christian Register*, February 14, 1924.

paper says: "When Unitarians develop an evangelism which sends out preachers and teachers, exhorters and inspirers, that can drive home conviction of sin and can awaken the sense of moral responsibility, we will start to grow."[21] Another writer in the periodical just mentioned says: "Instead of considering theology of such negligible importance that God must be referred to from the pulpit in only the most general terms, ought we not to value it as a normal stimulus to mental and spiritual growth?"[22] And the editor of the same paper writes: "All the Sunday lectures on economics, sociology, labor parties, single tax, poetry and the Bolsheviki are not to be compared with those innermost questions of the spirit which have made theology the queen of sciences."[23] Again this writer says: "Do we know that a church is as strong as its theology?"[24] Another writer in the Unitarian organ is of the opinion that the decay of Unitarianism can not be remedied by propaganda and organization alone; in his view *"there is something lacking in our gospel itself."*[25] Again the Unitarian editor has in another instance the following to say:

> This whole subject of theology is of transcendent interest and importance. We should rejoice if our readers would warm up to a searching, good-tempered, persistent discussion of doctrinal matters. The need among thoughtful people in our churches of just this thing is almost pitiable. Nothing is more crying. Theology is the articulation of religion, and we must have it or die spiritually. "The religion of the inarticulate" is pure nonsense. We have got to put it in clear-cut words.[26]

Now this is an interesting situation. Representative men in the Unitarian Church come out with the open confession that the great need for Unitarians is a the-

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[21] The same, April 11, 1918, p. 7.
[22] The same, November 27, 1919, p. 12.
[23] The same, March 21, 1918, p. 2.
[24] The same, April 15, 1920, p. 2.
[25] The same, September 2, 1920, p. 9.
[26] *The Christian Register,* March 20, 1919, p. 5.

ology. They believe a theology is absolutely essential to the life and prosperity of a church. Yet, there is abundant proof that the Unitarians as a church do not have a theology. The very essence of the Unitarian position, and of liberalism in general, is, in fact, that doctrine and theology are so unimportant that every man should be considered a law unto himself in such matters and the church should not stand for a particular theology. Religion, they say, "is a thing which exists independently of definite theological doctrines." And is it not a fair assumption that the Unitarian editor, since he recognizes the weakness of a church without a theology, might make his paper of some service in that direction to its constituency? But the *Christian Register* is, by its own confession, an organ of religious liberalists both within and without the ranks of nominal Christendom. This paper publishes articles defending the baldest atheism. In an editorial review of a book in which theology is regarded as rather of the nature of astrology — superstition — the *Christian Register* said: "It is for holding precisely the views here set forth that Unitarians have been denied Christian name and fellowship."[27]

What is here said about the message and teaching of Unitarianism applies equally to religious liberalism in general, as advocated by some of the leading theological seminaries of America. This is a fact that is generally recognized by Unitarians. The President of the American Unitarian Association says: "Unitarianism means the system of religion of certain churches and individuals whose Christianity is of the liberal type."[28] Professor Francis A. Christie writes: "The modernism of theological view professed by Unitarians is sometimes indistinguishable from the modernism permitted

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27 The same, February 20, 1919. The book here mentioned is *The New Orthodoxy,* by Professor Ames, of the University of Chicago.

28 *The New International Encyclopedia,* Article "Unitarianism."

in other Christian groups, and the necessity of a separate organization [such as the Unitarian Church] considered as a protest against older theological views, is often disputed [by liberals in evangelical churches]."[29] And the Unitarian editor says: "In all of the orthodox denominations there is a liberal wing in which the theological difference between them and us is almost nothing."[30] "It would take a microscopic analysis to discern the difference between some of the liberals in evangelical churches and the Unitarians," says *Zion's Herald.*

Some of the Unitarian leaders have expressed their grievance that men who advocate Unitarian teaching stick to evangelical churches. Others again believe, and indeed rightfully, that the cause of liberalism is served better if the liberals stay in these churches "and reform them from within," as a liberalistic writer expresses himself. Former President Taft, a member of the Unitarian Church, said in a public address: "The one trouble we suffer from — if it be a trouble — is that there are so many Unitarians in other churches. They are one with us in faith but do not sit in the pews of our Church. But that means that they [the other churches] are coming to us." Without question ex-President Taft is right. Religious liberalism within the evangelical churches is a far more serious danger to the Biblical faith than without. Decidedly, a foe from within is the greater menace. It should be added that many liberal ministers in evangelical denominations have united with the Unitarians, only to be disappointed in the hope of success under the banners of outspoken liberalism. A prominent Unitarian writer testifies that "sixty per cent of those who enter our ministry from other denominations, leave it,"[31] to engage in some other occupation, finding obviously, the liberal ministry an unsatisfactory

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[29] *The American Journal of Theology*, 1917, p. 554.
[30] *The Christian Register*, April 15, 1920.
[31] The same, October 23, 1919, p. 6.

calling. This fact is the more noteworthy, as the majority of Unitarian preachers were formerly ministers in evangelical churches.

The question suggests itself, How is it to be accounted for that evangelical churches whose ministers preach Unitarian doctrine, continue in some instances to show a growth and prosperity unknown in organized Unitarianism? The answer is obvious. There are those who will unite with an evangelical church that has a liberal minister, but would not do so if the denomination in question were officially committed to liberalism. Many are of the opinion that the preaching of the new theology from pulpits of evangelical churches is a passing phenomenon and that the churches after all stand for the old theology.

The New Theology comes to us with great pretensions. The old evangelical faith, so we are told, has outlived its usefulness. A new theology is needed which, by eliminating the supernatural, will make the Christian religion acceptable to the modern mind and thus save the church from (supposed) utter failure and insure her continued prosperity. Now in the light of the history and present condition of Unitarianism it must be said that these pretentious claims cannot be taken seriously. The Unitarians have tried out the modern liberalism. It has utterly failed to bring efficiency and prosperity to the church. While they have influenced multitudes toward discarding the Christian faith, they have not succeeded in the effort to persuade many of them to support an undogmatic church. So prominent a Unitarian leader as Professor Christie says: "As an undogmatic church Unitarianism is conducting a great historic experiment."[32] In other words, Unitarianism is, after a century of effort and unparalleled opportunity, still in the experimental stage. It is conducting an experiment

[32] *The American Journal of Theology,* October, 1917, p. 554.

to ascertain whether an undogmatic religious society can be successfully established. And what a costly experiment the fight against the truth of the Gospel has proved! As for the Christian Church, it never had an experimental stage. It was from the very beginning engaged in the great work of saving souls and rendering to them service for their Christian life.

The history of organized religious liberalism — within as well as without the Unitarian connection — offers an interesting field to the religious student. It affords unanswerable proof that the liberalization of Protestantism means its disintegration.

XXIX

THE CHASM BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW THEOLOGY

IT IS peculiarly interesting to notice that religious liberalism seems to be unable to understand the position of those who believe that the Christian faith was once for all delivered to the saints through divine revelation. Of the inability, on the part of liberals, to understand the old faith there is a great deal of evidence.

Modernists say, for example, the old faith has no other foundation than the authority of the theologians or of the church. They tell us that conservatives, instead of asking, "What is true?" ask, "What is authorized?" But the thought that the church, or the theologians, may on their own authority defend a religious doctrine, is, as intelligent people usually know, contrary to orthodox teaching and considered offensive in evangelical Christendom. Need it be said that he who recognizes the Bible as God's Word, accepts its teachings as true, not as merely humanly authorized doctrines concerning which it is not known whether they be true or not? Is it not an insult to say of the conservatives that instead of asking, "What is true?" they ask, "What is authorized?"

Again representatives of the new theology say they cannot accept the Biblical doctrine of salvation. They advance the view that the desire for salvation in the Bible sense is of a selfish — unjustifiable — character. A number of writers have said that since salvation is to be socially interpreted, unless God will save all mankind, their moral nature will not permit them to consent to their own personal salvation. The desire and willingness to be personally saved, they say, is rooted in

selfishness. Mark well, we are asked by liberalistic theologians to accept the opinion that to do the will of God, as Scripture requires, and seek personal salvation, is grounded in selfishness. Has there ever been heard a more miserable falsification than the assertion that salvation, such as Christ and the apostles preached, is grounded in selfishness? Is not, on the contrary, the acceptance of the old Gospel and the personal experience and realization of salvation the only true antidote to selfishness?

One of the fundamental Christian principles is the futility of self-effort in the realm of the true inner Christian life. The sinner seeking salvation must come to the place where he realizes that he cannot be his own savior, that his own effort availeth nothing; he must be willing to surrender himself and take salvation as a free gift of grace. The same principle holds good in every other phase of the true spiritual life. The greatest need for growth in grace is the deep realization of the worthlessness of self-effort, and the desire that the self-life should cease. Mark well, this does not mean indifference or indolence, but the very opposite. This principle is emphasized in Scripture. Our Lord has taught that self, or the self-life should be denied, that without Him we can do nothing, that the branch must draw life from the vine, that to the poor in spirit is the kingdom of heaven, that "my strength is made perfect in weakness." And Paul says: "When I am weak, then am I strong" (II Cor. 12:10), and again: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

Now this principle is a rock of offence to representatives of liberal religion. For illustration: A Unitarian editor refers to an article in *The Sunday School Times* as "amazingly harmful stuff." In this article it was

shown that "God's provision for a Spirit-filled life is just a provision for people who recognize their weakness and who have no illusion as to their strength." Commenting on this, the Unitarian editor says: "Such exegesis is a crime."[1]

It is obvious that representatives of religious liberalism find themselves unable to understand and appreciate the old Biblical truth. Of the things that are the essence of the Christian life and Christian truth they speak as the blind speak of the colors. Even the most precious truth of the atonement through Christ they regard as morally objectionable. In the midst of a land of Bibles they find themselves in dense spiritual darkness.

Dr. Francis Landey Patton, former President of Princeton Theological Seminary, has well said: "The only hope of Christianity is in the rehabilitating of the Pauline theology. It is back, back, back to an incarnate Christ and the atoning blood, or it is on, on, on to atheism and despair." It would be useless to deny that the liberalizing and modernizing of theology has inherent atheistic tendencies; in fact, the full-fledged modernization of theology, as represented by the more advanced type of religious liberalism, demanding the democratization of God, is atheism. Evidence for this statement has been given elsewhere. Only recently a Unitarian editor has published, under the title *Modernizing Two Basic Beliefs,* an article discussing a book in which the belief in God and in immortality are radically denied, and such denial is spoken of in the article as modernizing these doctrines.[2] Modernizing the faith is, in the language of liberalism, denying the faith.

Liberalists tell us that intellectual difficulties stand in the way of accepting the old Bible faith. Considered from the world's viewpoint this cannot be denied. But

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1 *The Christian Register,* August 19, 1920, p. 3.
2 *The Christian Register,* May 9, 1918, p. 15.

the thought that the difficulties can be lessened or eliminated by "restating" or liberalizing theology, is a delusion and a snare. The contrary is true. The acceptance of the new theology position raises difficulties that are greater than those of orthodoxy.

As was pointed out elsewhere, religious liberalism, though coming under a Christian name, has no acceptable foundation. Therefore it cannot claim reasonableness. We are told by representatives of liberalism that the question of the new theology's foundation is, like theology itself, a secondary matter; an assertion that is unacceptable to thinking people. The theologian who recedes from the rock foundation of God's Word, in order to take what he may suppose to be more reasonable ground, will, upon close examination, find that his new position is beset with greater difficulties than the orthodox position. If he is a thinking person he must sooner or later go backward or forward. It has been pointed out that many modernists have gone forward into what is nothing more nor less than sugar-coated atheism, and others are drifting in that direction. It should be added that moderate liberalism shows an unmistakable tendency of drifting into radical rationalism. And yet, the atheist's position is an utterly untenable one. In fact, atheism (the denial of God, or the teaching that God is merely the immanent world energy) is a most unreasonable supposition. That learned men doubt the existence of God — deny that there is a great mind and purpose back of the universe — is indeed remarkable. True, the unbelievers give various reasons why they do not believe in God; but the wonder is, that they do not perceive the far weightier unanswerable reasons for accepting the existence of God. That learned people fail to see the unreasonableness of the denial of God is clearly due to satanic influences, the devil having "blinded the minds of them which believe not." It is a sort of miracle of Satan, and not a small miracle at that.

The Gospel of salvation through the blood of Christ is to unregenerate, worldly-minded humanity, as well as to an apostate church, a foolish, despisable thing. Modern theology men have referred to it as "pestilential" teaching. Not a few well-known liberalistic theologians have only scoffing and ridicule for it. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; *but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.* We preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ *the power of God and the wisdom of God*" (I Cor. 1:18, 23, 24).

Is it not an appalling fact that there are in our day men, supposed to be ministers of the Gospel, who openly declare that the crucified Christ, as the apostles preached Him — or, in other words, the message of salvation through the Blood — is to them as well as to their congregations a stumblingblock and an offence? But to us who are saved, says the apostle, He is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." Now here is clear evidence of the fundamental contrast between the nonbeliever and the believer. What the one considers foolishness the other finds to be the power of God. To him who has accepted the Gospel message and is experiencing its power in his own life there is nothing so vital, nothing so satisfying, nothing to make his heart burn within him, as the sweet story of the Gospel, the message that Christ gave His life for us, "the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God" (I Pet. 3:18). On the other hand, the preaching of a modernized gospel is indeed an offence. You cannot blame those who say they find it an uninteresting, lifeless thing. It is a form of the Gospel minus the power thereof.

The fact must not be overlooked that religion is politely bowed out of existence by modern "religious" liberalism. Religious psychology, as now taught in our leading seminaries, undertakes to give a biological ex-

planation of religion. It denies that there is a special religious instinct. Religion, including Christianity, is reduced to a psychological formula, which means, in plain English, that it is explained away. The case is similar to that of a certain naturalistic scientist searching the heavens with his telescopes and declaring that he did not find God. Considered from this viewpoint there is no vital difference between Christianity and other religions. Even natural religion, such as every person is supposed to have, though he may not hold to any religion, is held to be identical with "the essential religion of the spirit." All this means clearly that, according to modern theology, religion cannot be a matter of so great importance as has been supposed. Though it is obviously true that there is no vital difference between the more advanced religious liberalism and paganism, we must insist that the Christianity taught by Christ and the apostles is of a vastly different character. There are the most fundamental differences between the old-fashioned Christianity and natural religion or pagan religion. Unless this be a fact, it were folly to propagate the Christian faith. In that case our missionaries would have no better message than that of the social gospel which reduces Christianity to a scheme for social improvement.

Our faith is "the victory that overcometh the world." True, there are those who in theory believe in the Scriptures, giving assent to the Christian faith, but have never personally appropriated the truth of Christianity to themselves nor made it a part of their own lives. Hence they do not have a real conviction of the truth, not the faith that overcometh the world. If they profess the Christian faith, they have not permitted the truth of the Gospel to become the determining factor in their own lives. They do not dedicate themselves to the service of God and of their fellows as followers of Jesus Christ. They find it too onerous a task to regulate their

lives according to the Scripture requirements and to bear the reproach of Christ. They may profess an "otherworldly" faith but in fact are enwrapped in this present world, its treasures and pleasures. Yet, though it is quite true that salvation is of faith by grace, it is just as true that faith is not without its fruits and the Scriptures state clearly what these fruits are. Dead faith is not true faith. "Dead orthodoxy" does not deserve the name of orthodoxy. Worldliness and mere pretense are, like modern liberalism, deadly foes to true Christianity.

Both prophecy and recent history are pointing to the fact that the end of the present dispensation will bear a striking resemblance to the earliest Christian period. Our Lord and His followers were "despised and rejected of men"; the great and mighty of the world deemed them beneath their notice or heaped infamy on their heads. Did not the Sanhedrin condemn Christ to death on the charge of blasphemy? Did not some of the philosophers of Athens refer to the Apostle Paul as a "babbler?" Yet after nearly three centuries of expansion the Christian Church began to grow cold and worldly. The rulers of the world, the worldly philosophers began to favor it. The church had a great outward growth. In the course of history Christianity was in many countries made the religion of the state. Every person was compelled by law to be a member of the state church. A large part of the world was apparently Christianized. But the supposed Christian religion of the masses and of the great of this world was a superficial thing.

Now in our time we see the world throwing off its Christian cloak. Modern liberalism, though it has retained the Christian name, does not claim to represent Christianity as the apostles preached it. Once more, as in the days of the apostles, Christianity is despised and rejected by the leaders of thought. And mark well, the

greatest enemies of the crucified Christ and of apostolic Christianity are men who hold some of the most responsible positions in the church, just as in that early day the most formidable foes of our Lord were the ecclesiastical leaders in the religious body of which He Himself was a member by birth. As modern liberalists in high stations openly reject the doctrines of the deity of Christ and the atonement through the Blood, just so the ecclesiastical dignitaries of that period condemned Him to death because, said they, "he made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7). And as in that period the masses followed their ecclesiastical dignitaries rather than "the carpenter of Nazareth," the fishermen of Galilee, and the tentmaker of Tarsus, so the masses of our time will not accept the leadership of those who follow the footsteps of Christ and the apostles. In a word, the world and the apostate church are openly despising the old Bible faith. And those who stand for the faith will not fare better at their hands than did Christ and the apostles at the hands of the high priests and scribes. The days are again upon us when to bear "the reproach of Christ" means something similar to what it did in the primitive Christian period.

The Apostle Paul refers repeatedly to the fact that the Gospel, as he preached it, was, in the eyes of the ancient unbelieving world, foolishness — "anti-intelligence," to use a modern term. Now this is precisely the charge advanced by modern liberalism against those who stand for the old Gospel. For example, Dean Shailer Mathews says: "Over against intelligence in religion [speaking of religion as represented by modern liberalism] is being organized anti-intelligence" meaning evangelical conservatism to which Dean Mathews refers in the same instance as "obscurant and reactionary religion."[4] The attitude taken by modern religious liberal-

[4] *The Biblical World*, November, 1920, p. 554.

ism to those who represent the old Bible faith is similar to that of the unbelievers in all ages of history. The fact is that between the full-fledged religious liberalism and free thought, or unbelief, there is just this difference that the one claims the predicate "religious" while the other does not. What the representatives of religious liberalism mean when they speak of nondoctrinal, noncreedal, ethical religion, is the same thing for which the freethinkers stand, though they do not pretend to be religious.

This means, as has been pointed out elsewhere, that the modern religion, as defended by its leading representatives, in contradistinction to pronounced free thought, is a trifling thing, a mere shibboleth. An illustration to the point is found in the confession of a noted liberalist, Professor Roy Wood Sellars, who, according to his own testimony, "for years felt that it would be better to give up the word *religion* entirely," but finally decided to retain it and unite with the Unitarians. Though an outspoken atheist, as his writings indicate, he is a prominent member of the Unitarian Church. He, as well as the leading professors in the liberalistic seminaries, is a representative of the modern nondoctrinal, ethical "religion." Now we are told that this class of religionists — the agnostics and the pronounced atheists — stand for "intelligence" against the supposed anti-intelligence of those who are loyal to the faith of the apostles. Mark well, despite the word-jugglery, camouflage and counterfeiting of which religious liberalism is guilty, conservatives are accused of obscurantism. They can say, with the Apostle Paul: "We are fools for Christ's sake" — in the eyes of the modern deniers of the fundamentals of the faith.

That the denial of the fundamentals within the church necessarily means disaster is not open to argu-

ment. Liberalism, as we have seen, rejects the supernatural character of Christianity. Natural religion alone is to find favor. It is, by way of illustration, as if that which our Lord has planted — the grapevines — should be suppressed, and that which naturally grows — the briars, burdock, milkweed and their ilk — be permitted to take possession of the vineyard in the hope that ultimately the fruit will surpass that of the grapevines. Every one knows what will happen if that which nature is planting in the vineyard be given the right of way. The grapevine has no chance where that which grows naturally is tolerated. Both in nature and religion the good plants require cultivation, effort and care. A general toleration of all plants in the vineyard would be an absurd proposition. The editor of an American daily writes:

> No church can, without self-stultification, retain in its ministry men who deny that which the Church deems indispensable doctrine. The Church cannot, of course, order the mind of any man and make him believe that which he cannot believe. And no honest man will teach what he is convinced is not true. It were better, then, that the ministers who find themselves out of accord with ancient doctrines go their own way in peace, leaving it to the established churches to pursue their important and highly valuable labors in accordance with unalterable conviction.[6]

Consider for a moment what would be the consequence if the liberalistic professors in the seminaries advocated modern *immoral teachings*, such for example as the exceedingly loose views in regard to the relation of the sexes which are now advanced by not a few learned and influential writers in both Europe and America. But clearly the denial of the Christian fundamentals by preachers is not a whit less disastrous to true religion than the advocacy of immorality. Is the church of Jesus Christ going to countenance that sort of thing in her midst?

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[6] *The Gazette Times*, Pittsburgh, Pa., December 18, 1923.

The fact cannot be too strongly emphasized that compromise with the new theology means defeat. The thought that the cause of the old faith can be enhanced by a small measure of modernization is a delusion. No sooner have you discarded some point of the faith in favor of a more liberal view, when you discover — if you are accustomed to doing your own thinking — that your position is untenable. "One thing is certain," says Dr. Henry B. Smith, "that infidel science will rout everything except thorough-going Christian orthodoxy. All the flabby theories will go overboard. The fight will be between a stiff, thorough-going orthodoxy and a stiff, thorough-going infidelity."[7] A position of compromise is a losing position. It means virtually the acceptance of the liberal viewpoint.

There is every reason to believe that, with the progress of the modern apostasy and the drawing nigh of the coming of the Lord, it will become more and more evident that a cold, formal, worldly type of Christianity, tuned to the spirit of the age, will not stand the test. It must be expected that for the undecided and faltering who do not mean to take an out-and-out position for the Christian faith, it will become increasingly difficult to cast their lot with those who stand for the faith. Those who do not know from experience the blessed reality of the truth of the Gospel and of a life of prayer-fellowship with God will find themselves in danger of being swept away by the popular current of unbelief.

The apostasy that is evident on every hand, then, is an unmistakable sign of the times. It should arouse believing Christendom from its lethargy and listlessness to a realization of conditions as they are. In consequence of the apostasy the church finds itself today face to face with a crisis such as it has never passed through

[7] *Apologetics,* p. 194; quoted in *The Princeton Theological Review,* 1913, p. 502.

in its history. The need of the hour is for men and women who from conviction stand for Christ and the truth, for "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints," counting with Paul "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord" (Phil. 3:8). The crisis is here. Are we, as loyal disciples of our Lord, ready to meet it squarely? Are we willing to unreservedly come out on His side, taking an out-and-out stand for Him? May our answer be that of Peter at a time when many went back and walked no more with Jesus, and the Master addressed to the disciples the question, "Will ye also go away?" Then Simon Peter answered Him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:67-69).

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